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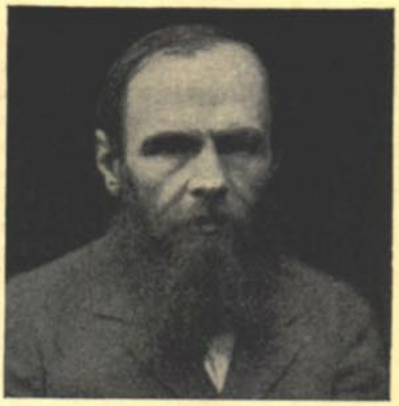

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Alberto Moravia

The Marx-Dostoevsky Duel

and other Russian Notes

THIS spring Leningrad's sky, filled with grey clouds, had a vast melancholy, and in the misty distances the city looked flat and indistinct, almost levelled out on its horizon to a smoky relief of long, uniform buildings over which here and there the spire of a tower rose or the gold of a minaret gleamed forth. It was raining; or rather the atmosphere was so humid that it covered everything, the marble walls of the great public buildings and the trees in the parks, with a thin film of gelid moisture.

In this atmosphere, under this sky, Leningrad appears diaphanous, evanescent, completely submerged in a cold and swampy greenish colour which, rather than an artificial hue, seems a mould deposited by centuries of humidity. Here are the aristocratic palaces along the banks of the Neva, magnificent, empty shells; here is the bridge before which stands rampant Peter the Great's horse; here are the public gardens, still bare and wintry-looking; here is the square of the Winter Palace, a huge amphitheatre which reminds one of Paris's Napoleonic squares; here is crowded, chaotic Nevsky Prospect; here is the Fontanka Canal, set between two rows of frigid, severe buildings and full of black, motionless water.

And here we are finally in the city's ancient quarter where the streets, wide but short, form a sort of checkerboard pattern and are flanked by gloomy, unpainted tenements, the old pavement broken up by pot-holes and puddles, all blackly lustrous under the drizzling rain.

Empty streets, peaceful and lugubrious, in which one sees a few street urchins playing, heedless of the rain. We enter an enormous street door, its threshold unpaved and clogged with mud, and then we come to a halt in a courtyard which is completely occupied by tall stacks of wood used as fuel for the stoves. The walls of this courtyard are leprous, stripped bare of plaster and paint and traversed here and there by malign, zigzagging black cracks. A middle-aged woman appears at one of the stairways and asks us if we wish to visit the apartment in which Feodor Dostoevsky lived for quite a long time.

We reply that this is just why we've come, and follow her up the stairs. The staircase is wide, but it has a brutal and sinister gloominess: black walls stained by humidity, steps of squalid, unfinished, cracked stone, some of them broken or missing entirely, a railing of rough wood cut without care, black and sketchy-looking. This stairway is dark, filled with an atrocious sadness, and this is, remember, the springtime; one has to imagine it during the long, snowy winters when the murk shuts down both inside and outside the house.

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Why have I stopped to describe this stairway? Because this is the stairway which Dostoevsky used to walk up and down, when for years he lived in this tenement house; but it is also the stairway which Dostoevsky's hero, Raskolnikov, walked up and down, before and after he killed the usurer. Yes, and because I am here together with two Dostoevskian scholars who tell me that this is without a doubt the tenement where Raskolnikov lived; while being, at the same time, the house occupied by the author of *Crime and Punishment.* In other words, Dostoevsky's identification with Raskolnikov was total; he placed Raskolnikov in his own apartment, indeed in his own room, had him walk up and down his own stairs, and, generally speaking, made him move through all those places which he himself frequented at that time in St. Petersburg.

At last we have reached the top-floor landing and in the half-darkness the woman opens a bituminous-black door and precedes us through a very narrow little hallway completely crowded with wardrobe closets; we can barely squeeze through. Along this hallway two doors are placed, behind which, because of the crowding in all large Russian cities, two families are living; the third door in the rear is the woman's apartment, that is, Dostoevsky's, or rather, Raskolnikov's. But let Dostoevsky speak: "His little room under the very roof of a tall five-storey tenement was more like a closet than a place to live." And, actually, the room we enter is very tiny and above all narrow, looking almost like a continuation of the cramped hallway. On one side of it are aligned a bed, a wardrobe closet, a small table which holds a sewing machine. At the back of the room there is a window covered with the customary curtains, drapes, and counter-drapes, yet I really can't see how one can manage to get there since the rest of the room is completely taken up by a round table on which, alongside a porcelain tea service, rests an old-fashioned iron, its carbon burning, and a shirtwaist with its sleeves laid out which the woman had been ironing. In this tiny room Dostoevsky lived, and here, in turn, he had placed Raskolnikov. Here it was that the writer meditated the killing of the usurer, and here he made his character do the same sort of meditating.

AFTER the house of Dostoevsky and Raskolnikov, the two Russian scholars make me walk over the entire, exact distance ("seven hundred and thirty steps in all," Dostoevsky informs us) that lies between the house of the killer and the house of the killed. We pass the melancholy, black Fontanka Canal, the bridge shaped like an ass's back that stands between two rows of marble palaces, the shapeless Sennaia Square or Hay Market, and here at last is the street where the usurer used to live, very similar to the one on which Dostoevsky dwelt.

Again I go through a great gloomy doorway, climb up a tenebrous stairway, damp and sinister, and halt on a dark landing before the usurer's door. The bell that Raskolnikov rang so many times before and after the crime is there, beside the door; perhaps if I ring it, the door will creep open very slowly and the old woman's repulsive head will appear. But no, there has been a revolution, there are no more usurers in Russia. On our way back, the two Russian scholars assure me that Dostoevsky, so psychological, so abstract as to verge on the fantastic, was photographically precise in his topographical references and generally in all the descriptions of his settings. "We know everything there is to know about Dostoevsky's characters, and at Leningrad everything has remained exactly as it was in Dostoevsky's time; and, in his turn, Dostoevsky has described everything without the slightest alteration or addition." The morning ends on the Neva, at the precise point where the demoniac Svidrigaylov shot himself in the temple. You remember? "A thick, milky mist hung over the city. Svidrigaylov walked along the slippery, muddy wooden pavement in the direction of the Little Neva. . . ."

I HAVE wished to describe this visit minutely first of all to give an idea of the surroundings in which Dostoevsky's novels

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were meditated and composed; and then because this visit, during which, with the Russian's typical capacity to take literature as seriously as life and to regard literary characters as though they were living persons, we did nothing but talk of Dostoevsky's novels and heroes—this visit can indicate the great change which has taken place in the U.S.S.R., above all since the de-Stalinisation, in the official and therefore also in the private attitude towards this writer. Perhaps some years ago I could not have made this visit. The Russians deny, though weakly and with much hesitancy, that Dostoevsky was outlawed under Stalin. The truth was that Dostoevsky was not being re-published, old editions of his work passed from hand to hand among his faithful readers, getting dirtier and more tattered, and the literary periodicals didn't mention him. Dostoevsky, in short, as Fadeyev told me some years ago in Rome, was of course a Russian writer, indeed someone whom one could not and must not forget, yet he was also a reactionary, a supporter of Czarism and Orthodoxy, a psychological, decadent, individualistic, and introspective writer. But was this evaluation completely true? I believe that the Stalinists were partly right in regarding Dostoevsky as their adversary (just think of his novel, *The Devils*), but in large part they were wrong.

Let us take, for example, the best and most famous of Dostoevsky's novels: *Crime and Punishment*. This masterpiece will for a long time remain an indispensable key to understanding what has happened in Russia and Europe during the last fifty years. Who is Raskolnikov? He is the intellectual before the advent of Marxism, indignant against the social injustice and abject misery of Czarist Russia, and resolved to carry out a demonstrative, symbolic action against these conditions. Raskolnikov had not read Marx and he admired Napoleon, the model for the entire 19th century of the superman; yet it is symptomatic that, contrary to the Stendhalian Julian Sorel, another admirer of Napoleon, Raskolnikov does not dream of greatness, but rather of justice. And further, that his hate centres on a usurer, that is, on the extreme instance, according to the Marxist formula, of the exploitation of man by man. But who then is the usurer? He is the European bourgeoisie that speculates on the stock exchange with industrial stocks, the fruit of the working-class's surplus value, lives on the income furnished by the national and colonial proletariat, and does this all unawares and with a tranquil conscience. He is a symbol, in sum, fundamentally not very different from the conventional banker-figure of anti-bourgeois satire, with his pendulous fat and high silk hat, and the financier, his huge paunch wrapped in a white waistcoat and his hands loaded with rings that scatter glittering rays.

Although he had not read Marx and regarded himself as a superman beyond good and evil, Raskolnikov was already, in embryo, a people's commissar; and, in fact, the first people's commissars came out of that same class of the intelligentsia to which Raskolnikov belonged, and possessed his identical ideas—the same thirst for social justice, the same terrible ideological consistency, the same inflexibility in action. And Raskolnikov's dilemma is the very same one that confronts the people's commissars and Stalin: "Is it right for the good of humanity to kill the old usurer (read: liquidate the bourgeoisie)?" So why should the Communists have such an aversion to Dostoevsky?

The reason is quite simple. Raskolnikov's hatred of the usurer has a Christian origin. In reality, this hate is the hate of the medieval Christian for commerce and profit-making, the irreconcilability of the Bible's teachings with banking and interest rates. This hate, this irreconcilability placed banking and commerce for centuries in the hands of the Jews until the day when the Christian peoples of Europe (and first among them the Italians) realised that they could be bankers or merchants and at the same time upright folk fearful of God, at peace with themselves and their religion. But Raskolnikov belonged, as did the people's commissars and Stalin, to a medieval country where banking and commerce were controlled by restricted racial and social groups, a backward peasant country

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attached to a still primitive and mystical Christianity. Thus for Raskolnikov banking and commerce are usury and the European and Russian bourgeoisie which practises usury becomes the old usurer; one must therefore kill the old usurer, that is, liquidate the bourgeoisie.

But at this point the until-then united roads of Dostoevsky and Marxism divide and branch off. The Marxists, who are not Christians, say: "Let us eliminate the usurers and go forward. After the death of the usurer we shall inaugurate a new society without classes and without usury. The creation of this society fully justifies the murder of the usurer." On the other hand Dostoevsky, who has remained a Christian, after having led us step by step through all the stages of a crime that he had doubtlessly meditated, fondled, and approved a thousand times in his heart, suddenly, with an unexpected *volte-face*, puts Raskolnikov in the wrong, that is, the Marxists and Stalin, and declares: "No, it is not right to kill, even if it be for the good of mankind. Christ has said: You must not kill." And in fact Raskolnikov repents, and reads the Bible together with Sonia. Dostoevsky swathes the end of his novel in a mystical aura: "But here begins a new story, the story of the gradual rebirth of a man, the story of his gradual regeneration, of his gradual passing from one world to another, of his advance towards a new and hitherto unknown reality." The Marxists, however, would have ended it thus: "But here begins the revolution."

THIS divergence between Dostoevsky and Marxism is the result of different evaluations of what constitutes evil. For the Marxists evil is the usurer, that is, the bourgeoisie; Dostoevsky, however, after having at first accepted this thesis, rejects it and comes to the Christian conclusion that the evil is not so much the usurer as the means adopted by Raskolnikov to eliminate the usurer, namely, violence. In the novel this evil as seen by Dostoevsky is not only represented by the violent death of the usurer, but also and above all by that of the innocent and pious Lizabeta, the usurer's sister, whom Raskolnikov murders so as to get rid of a witness to his crime. In short, for the Marxists evil does not really exist, since it is solely a matter of a social evil which can be eliminated by the revolution. But for Dostoevsky evil exists as an individual fact, in each man's heart, and expresses itself precisely in the violent means used by the revolution. With their historic and social justifications the Marxists can wash clean even the blackest of consciences. Dostoevsky rejects this sort of cleansing and affirms the ineradicable existence of evil.

So, for the last ninety years, we have witnessed in Russia a kind of match between Dostoevsky and Marx. The first round was won by Dostoevsky, since he had written a masterpiece; the second round went to Marx, since his theories produced a revolution; yet the third round seems to have been won by Dostoevsky: the evil thrown out the window by Marxism has returned in torrents through the door of Stalinism, that is, through the means adopted by the revolution to establish and maintain itself. And what is this evil? Khrushchev has already told us in his speech; I will touch on it more briefly: The evil in the U.S.S.R. is represented by the innumerable Lizabetas, the innumerable innocents tortured, imprisoned, murdered in the name of the revolution, who are now being rehabilitated but to whom can never be given back what was taken from them. In short, the evil is the pain, the immense quantity of pain which has submerged Russia during the last fifty years. This pain, in turn, is the blow of Raskolnikov's axe, justified by the good of humanity. Unfortunately the axe blow, at least in reality, weighs much more than the good of humanity. On the scales, the good of humanity leaps up in the air, light, high, very high; while the axe blow pushes down the other plate, low, low, very low. Therefore: Dostoevsky's victory, at least for the time being. It is true that the Marxists will still insist on saying that the evil does not exist, that the evil is really, or rather objectively, capitalism. But is it possible to main-

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tain, be it only "objectively," that Stalin and Beria were capitalists?

The Tomb of Lenin and Stalin

I JOINED the queue about four in the afternoon of a cold, rainy day. A capricious wind which seemed to come from all sides was blowing, so at one moment I felt my face stung by the thin rain, at the next the back of my neck. In front of me stood two hefty blonde girls dressed in flowered cretonne summer dresses. They bore the rain with indifference, the pinkish flesh of their shoulders showing through the sopping cotton stuff. Behind me there was a typical Soviet family: he perhaps a worker, wearing a dark blue suit, but without a tie, tall, pale, his wide face expressing gravity and compunction; she a matron with ample breasts and shoulders and a stolid face; between them a little girl about ten years old whom the father tried to shelter from the rain with a corner of his jacket. For the rest, the entire queue supported the rain with characteristic Moscovite insensibility: I could see only one umbrella from one end to the other of the whole procession.

The queue wound like a snake across a good half of that part of the Red Square which slopes slightly upwards. And it seemed to point directly at the many-coloured domes shaped like onions, pineapples, boys' tops, and turnips that rose above the church of Saint Basil which stood out at the rear of the square. Actually, half-way across the square, the queue bent at a right angle in the direction of the tomb's truncated pyramid. A white line on the pavement indicated where the queue should stand. Policemen, distributed all along the file, would give warnings, not without some roughness, to all those who stepped over this mark.

I had purposely joined the Russians and so I had to wait along with them. But foreign delegations were not obliged to do this and were permitted to go straight into the tomb, without any waiting. I saw one of them, Chinese or Indo-Chinese, little yellow men in tunics and wide blue pants, who passed at a run in the direction of the tomb. But I wanted to do exactly what a Russian from the provinces passing through Moscow would do. Who knows? perhaps by doing the same things as these Russians, so patiently waiting in front and behind me under the rain, I might succeed in experiencing the same emotions. Which emotions? Well, they would take in a little of everything, starting with mere curiosity and going all the way up to admiration, devotion, veneration, fanaticism. It occurred to me that in this queue there could very well be standing two or three of those innocents, today liberated and rehabilitated, who, according to Khrushchev's report, had spent, due to Stalin's "errors," some years chopping down trees in remote concentration camps in north-eastern Siberia. What were their feelings while they waited in file beneath the rain, patient as always, to enter the tomb? A question for which Dostoevsky might have found a reply; I did not feel quite up to answering it. The human heart is profound and complicated; as for the Russian heart, it is truly unfathomable.

Meanwhile the crowd crept forward in short spurts. Now I am at the centre of the Red Square, on one side of me the long, low buildings in neo-Slavic style of the Gum department store, and on the other the beautiful red, crenelated walls of the Kremlin. And now, here is the entrance, guarded by two armed sentinels. Other guards inspect one by one all those who go in. Swift, expert glances, given by profound judges of the social and political fauna. One peasant was compelled to untie his faggot and show the hen it contained. An awkward student type was asked what he was carrying in his leather briefcase. At last, here I am, inside the tomb.

The entrance was a completely bare room whose walls, floor, and ceiling reflected the gleam of the marbles with which they were covered. Still in file, one traversed this antechamber, descended a few steps, and then, passing through a door, finally penetrated into the crypt. Here, in a brightly illuminated, large glass case, I saw the two dictators spread out supine in their coffins like two Egyptian Pharoahs in their uncovered sarcophagi. The

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glass case was set on a platform which divided the crypt into two equal parts, one lower, the other higher. Visitors had to ascend a few steps at the side of Lenin's corpse, walk in file beside the case for a brief flat stretch, then descend again other steps that went alongside Stalin's corpse.

FIRST of all I looked at the two dictators together. Both lay stretched out on their backs, slightly on an incline, the head higher than the feet, the hands clasped over their stomachs, and the eyes closed. Up to the chest the two corpses preserved the shape and outline of the human body; yet one had the disconcerting impression that, from the chest down, they ended in two flat, thin forms similar to two empty sacks. Lenin seemed very pale, bloodless, and at the same time shiny and solid, as if he were made of wax or ivory. What struck me were the lines of his face, which, if not indeed Mongolian, were certainly somewhat Asiatic: a round, wide face, high cheekbones, eyes drawn up at the corners. The arches of the brows, raised almost at an acute angle under his bald forehead, gave a look of concentration, attention, and also authority to his entire face. It was a face without any brutality or coarseness, of a fineness of contour completely intellectual and wise. The mouth, enclosed by the moustaches and the small pointed beard, had a firm, bitter expression. My eyes almost involuntarily travelled from the corpse to the faces of the visitors: attentive but inexpressive, tense but atonic, it was impossible to know what they were thinking.

Now I was at Stalin's flank. Looking at him, as I walked down the four steps and those following me pressed forward, I could not help but remember a famous passage from Manzoni's *The Betrothed*, when the innkeeper, after having, on the evening of the riots, put Renzo to bed, "paused for a moment to gaze at this irksome guest, raising his lamp over his face." Manzoni explains the innkeeper's gesture as being due to "the kind of attraction which sometimes makes us regard an object of our dislike as attentively as an object of our love, and perhaps is nothing else than the desire to know what it is that works so strongly on our emotions." At the moment I thought that in this case I would have to substitute a somewhat stronger word for Manzoni's "dislike," indeed a much, much stronger one; and then I looked at him. Stalin's face was not as fine as Lenin's, nor as waxy. He still retained the colour of life, a certain bilious yellowishness on the forehead and around the eye sockets, and almost the shadow of a beard speckled with small tobacco-coloured dots on the cheeks. His hair was thick, a regular grey fleece, the small eyes hidden under heavy brows, the nose typically Georgian (in Georgia one sees such noses at every street corner), curved, fleshy, prominent, the moustaches grey and drooping. Beneath these moustaches, the mouth had a very definite expression, at once distrustful, brutal, discontented, and falsely good-humoured. It was the mouth of a man who grumbles, who threatens, who plays a game, and who is suspicious. The whole face had something heavy and slack about it—it was, in short, the face of a tired but tough old man. In contrast to Lenin who, as I have said, had an expression of intellectual and speculative lucidity, Stalin's face one would say was rather that of a man not so much intelligent as rich in humours and temperament. I thought that it was not by chance that he had been called, in the period of the "cult of personality," "the father of the people," even if he had been a father on the style of Saturn who ate his own children. But meanwhile the crowd was pushing against me and I had to go out. I took a final glance at the Georgian dictator and then I went down the last step and was outside, once again under the rain.

THE visit to the tomb of Lenin and Stalin is one of the obligatory stops of political tourism at Moscow. I can't imagine what impression this visit makes on the many Asians who flock in pilgrimage to Moscow; probably, to these men who come from the steppes of Central Asia, the mountains of Tibet, or the rice fields of China, the public exhibition of the embalmed remains of the

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two dictators must seem a normal thing. In fact one must not forget that Asia, even in the midst of the present Communist upsurge, is still the continent of the most idolatrous and bizarre cults. But for the European the affair doesn't go so smoothly. After his visit to the tomb, the first question that comes to the European's mind is this: Why? Why have the Russians embalmed the two corpses and exposed them to the curiosity and veneration of the multitude, rather than, as has been done for centuries in Europe and also in Asia, closing them up in two tombs, even magnificent ones, and letting their bodies disintegrate in peace beneath the bronze and marble?

In this tomb of Lenin and Stalin there is something which, strange to say, contradicts both the Marxist conception of life (and also of death) and the idea which one in Europe holds of death, its mystery and dignity. Marxist are certainly the moving graves I had observed from the train, on the stretch between Kiev and Moscow, where lay the partisans who had died attacking that railroad line when it was in German hands: each grave had a plaque inscribed with a name, and a small staff at the top of which was fastened the Red Star; Christian, according to the European tradition, are the closely ranked tombs of the Moscovite Czars in the cathedral of the Archangel, inside the Kremlin. But the tomb of Lenin and Stalin makes one think of very modern America where, quite similarly, in the "funeral homes" "morticians" embalm, retouch, and put make-up on the dead so that they can be preserved for ever and exhibited to the gaze of their dear ones. In this tomb there is expressed a primitive religiosity, of an archaic type, not unlike that of the Americans and probably also the Asians, for whom the dead person is not spirit, is not soul, is not memory, is not history, but is himself in person, with his particular eyes, his mouth, his nose, his hair; an unbelieving religiosity, so to speak, which, even before affirming survival in another world, is anxious to deny the corruption of the body here; a religiosity, in short, similar to that of the Egyptians or other ancient peoples who placed in the tomb foodstuffs, playthings, toilet articles, jewels, as though the dead person, after death, continued to live in the same way as when he was alive.

This religiosity clashed, in the tomb of Lenin and Stalin, with the anti-metaphysical conception of Marxism, and the outcome has been a kind of compromise: a tomb without religion yet the centre and object of a devotion which smacks much of the religious; the two dictators embalmed and preserved as they were in life, but not so much to assert their immortality as their glory. Thus it is obvious that the tomb of Lenin and Stalin was not born out of political, propagandistic calculation, but rather came from a specific historical and psychological background, from a specific society which has simultaneously very modern and very primitive characteristics.

Tamburlane

TOWARDS the end of its course the road that goes to Samarkand leaves the steppe and climbs six or seven hundred metres up to a flat tableland on which the city stands. At the beginning of this plateau there is a sort of narrow passage where two mountains of equal height draw very close together, leaving only a very small opening through which flows the Zerofsan river. The two mountains rise up sheerly, really suggesting the idea of two door-posts framing a doorway. This is the so-called Tamburlane's Portal, the obligatory route for anyone who goes to or comes from Samarkand. Through this Portal, Tamburlane, who never stayed still and (like Napoleon at Paris) only stopped in his capital in order to prepare for war, passed with his armies first in the direction of Syria, then of Persia, of the Caucasus, and of India. They were barbarian armies, and it is easy to imagine their interminable and helter-skelter procession through this gap: innumerable horsemen of all the races of Central Asia riding small, massive, hairy horses, a few carts, nobody on foot. Light weapons such as the bow, the lance, the sword; small shields, short jackets of mail, helmets without visors.

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These armies reflected the image of a society of nomads and extremely mobile herdsmen, accustomed to living in tents and for ever in search of new pastures for their sheep and camels. This society's psychology was determined by the absence of mountains, valleys, rivers, seas, in short, of any sort of natural frontier to that huge space—the Asian steppes—in which they wandered, and which extends, flat and uniform, between Russia, China, and Persia. It was natural that, with such handy weapons, with such grasshopper-like mobility, and with their particular psychology of the infinite, Tamburlane and his armies won his victories against the rich, stable, unbelligerent farmers and artisans of Syria, Persia, the Caucasus, and India: what counts above all in war is an element of the unpredictable, of surprise and paradox.

In Europe where, to our good fortune, Tamburlane never set foot, the Asian conqueror has never been more than a name surrounded by a vague, legendary fame, somewhat like Ghengis Khan, from whom Tamburlane claimed to descend; but in Asia, the seat of his empire, his memory is still alive, mixed with admiration and terror, like the memory of a gigantic eruption of a volcano, which subsequently never woke again from its lethargy. And the traveller in these countries which today are so pacific cannot help looking with suspicion at every peasant and villager, thinking that perhaps tomorrow these people, now not even nomads, might again rise up and take the path of war and, moreover, with the aid of very modern weapons (the atomic bomb, the airplane, the rocket) repeat the deeds of their ancestors (or, better, reveal the same psychology, which is what matters most in both peace and war). At any rate, two world wars have at least accomplished this: they have made the figure of Tamburlane quite close and comprehensible to us, not at all the "picturesque" and "historical" personage he was for our 19th century grandfathers. Tamburlane beheaded people in prodigious quantities; at Delhi he cut off the heads of 200,000 prisoners whom he didn't know what to do with. But what else did Hitler do a few years back?

I passed through Tamburlane's Portal towards evening: the sky was already pervaded by the green, limpid, funereal light which precedes nightfall; the two mountains standing guard over the pass were as black as Chinese ink; the river ran between the mountains, its mirroring waters the colour of steel reddened here and there by the sunset's fire. One cannot easily escape the tyranny of a famous name, which indeed has nothing to do with the innocent natural setting on which men have imposed it. Anyway, I could not avoid stopping the car and lingering in that silent, wild, and solitary spot until night fell. And as I looked at the river, the mountains, and the sky, I had the usual depressing, disconsolate thoughts, since this, at bottom, was Tamburlane's last and greatest victory: to have succeeded through his atrocities in surviving in the memory of men who still hate him today, while so many others, who wished to do good for these same men, have been utterly forgotten by them.

The Hotel at Samarkand

IT MUST have been a hotel in Czarist times, a colonial, Asian hotel for military men, police, and bureaucrats, somewhat similar in its crudeness and squalor to certain old inns in an Italian mountain region or provincial watering-place. I arrived there at night and as I approached the door with glass panes under the portico I saw a singular scene: some Tartars, who looked like peasants or shepherds, were trying to get into the hotel, while, on the other side of the glass door, the porter, an elderly, moustachioed Russian, was signing to them to go away, for he did not intend to open the door for them. The Tartars were not being arrogant, on the contrary they seemed quite humble and were presenting their arguments in supplicatory voices, beating almost timidly with their hands on the glass panes; but the porter was adamant. In the West such a scene would not have been strange: the porter was refusing access to the hotel of people, as one says, of

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an inferior class. But in the U.S.S.R., where there are no classes and everyone can go everywhere, this scene struck me with its strangeness. Perhaps this particular group of Tartars was known to the porter for having on some previous occasion created a disturbance in the hotel. But the uncertainty of this supposition sufficed for me to give to this scene an almost symbolic meaning, of a Kafkian kind. Also in Kafka's novels, for example in *The Castle*, there are characters who wish to enter, one does not know why, a particular place, and there are others who, one does not know why, stand in their way. In the Tartars' case it might be supposed that they wished to enter the hotel because in their eyes it represented Europe and its civilisation, to which all of Asia aspires and tries to conform. Outside of the hotel was, therefore, Asia—inside, Europe. I pushed my way past the Tartars, however, and the porter, having recognised me as a foreign traveller, opened the door a crack so that I could slip in; the Tartars remained outside.

But once inside the hotel I saw what brand of Europe was at stake: a squalid and filthy lobby, with crude benches set all round walls painted with an ugly jaundice-colour varnish; dark, bare corridors lit by weak bulbs encased in round enamelled iron shades; a gloomy staircase, with steps of rough-hewn stone. As we passed through these morgue-like corridors the doors along them opened up one after the other and men clad in striped pyjamas stuck their heads out and inspected us with unabashed curiosity. And then, the rooms: crowded with rugs, carpets, velvet coverings, and all sorts of hairy, dust-accumulating hangings despite the already suffocating heat. After washing myself, I went down into the dining-hall. It was a large yellow room, longer than it was wide; at one extremity stood a dais on which sat a small orchestra, at the other were the doors leading to the kitchen and a table on which were arranged, under glass, the usual miserable delicacies: a few bottles of wine and vodka, small plates that held samples of cheeses, salamis, and caviar. The tables, lined up in two rows from one end to the other of the long hall, were surrounded by men, not a single woman. They were Russian and Uzbeck men, some in military uniform, some in shirt-sleeves or the local native costume. There was the usual preoccupied gravity visible on all these faces, like that of people who wait in the restaurant of a railroad station for a train which perhaps will never arrive. The orchestra was playing, alas, old Italian ditties from the period after the First World War: *Fru Fru del Tabarin*; *No, Cara Piccina, No*. And I, sitting at my table, thought of the Tartars who had remained outside of this European paradise and I could not help but ask myself once again: Why did these Tartars want to come in? And why didn't the porter let them?

The Monuments

NATURALLY, like all the great butchers of history, Tamburlane protected the arts. The half-wrecked Mosque of Bibi-Khanum is the most striking thing that one can see at Samarkand: the earthquakes, while having ruined it, have conferred on it a beauty which the Tumiridi Monuments, more colossal and immense than beautiful, rarely possess when completely intact. I do not think that Dali or the other surrealists have ever been at Samarkand; nevertheless, the Mosque of Bibi-Khanum is an excellent example of how a natural agent, an earthquake, can produce singularly new artistic effects such as no conscious artistic effort could ever achieve. Like all the monuments of this Oriental city, the Mosque is situated among the old trees and uncultivated fields of a vast abandoned garden. Even from outside, the red brick walls show black fissures and cracks which wind up from the foundations all the way to the top of the structure. Resting on these unsteady walls, the huge cupola covered with blue majolica tiles resembles that of an astronomical observatory; a third of the cupola has collapsed; through the fretted, crumbling, irregular opening, black ugly birds ceaselessly fly in and out, cawing and flapping their wings. From the floor below I look up and my first impulse is to run: whole fragments, masses of bricks, wrenched

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loose and dislocated, dangle here and there, projecting out from the concave surface of the cupola and giving one the sensation that at any moment they will crash down on one's head. The entire monument is pervaded with a mysterious, menacing, grandiloquent, and melancholy vitality; but it is the vitality not of a work of art, but rather that of a ruin, just as one experiences it in Piranesi and the surrealists.

Besides the Mosque of Bibi-Khanum, Tamburlane built many other monuments, which make Samarkand one of the most important archæological and artistic centres in all of Asia. The Russians have limited themselves to constructing their quarters of anonymous, State-monopoly buildings at the margin of the ancient city, so that in large part the monuments are found in peaceful, rustic surroundings, a little like those of Rome before the unification of Italy. The tomb of Tamburlane rises at the border of a clearing shadowed by a magnificent plantain whose branches shelter a fountain; at the moment I arrived two small grey donkeys were there drinking, led by a halter by an Uzbeck peasant. The tomb has the customary shape of buildings of its epoch: an enormous cube, blindingly white, with a great ogival portal; above the cube, an onion-shaped cupola covered with scintillating azure majolica tiles. In contrast to the tomb of Lenin and Stalin at Moscow, here nobody stands in line to visit the Asian conqueror's sepulchre: sun, desert, and silence surround the structure and keep it, one might say, in a calcified and remote atmosphere, beyond time and history. Inside, the tomb is clean and dry as an emptied sea-shell; one descends by a stairway into the crypt. And here is the black marble sepulchre of Tamburlane himself.

The Russian archæologist who accompanied me, after having related the history of the monument, told me that a Russian scholar had recently discovered a way of reconstructing exactly the living lineaments of any human skull. Some years ago the Soviet government had had the tomb of Tamburlane opened, the skull sent to Moscow, and the scholar then reconstructed the conqueror's features. The archæologist showed me a photograph of the reconstruction. Tamburlane had large eyes, somewhat protuberant, surrounded and supported by thick, deep wrinkles; a curved nose with large nostrils; tumid lips enclosed by drooping moustaches and a small pointed beard; the design of his face long, ascetic, hieratic. The expression of this face, in the reconstruction, is very life-like and can only be defined by a single word: pitiless. The archæologist spoke of Tamburlane's criminal brutalities and hazarded a psychological explanation: Tamburlane had been a maniac of cruelty.

I didn't reply; but I thought that, as usual, this explanation did not explain anything. And I told myself that the cruelty of men like Tamburlane should rather be attributed to a rare historical necessity, yes, but nevertheless always a feasible one. In other words, Tamburlane's cruelty certainly had for his victims an absurd, inexplicable, accursed character; but for Tamburlane it was, on the contrary, a simple instrument of domination, forged, be it well understood, by a host of environmental and contingent circumstances. In sum, just as in love, in order to be cruel, it is necessary to have two, the one who is cruel and the one who undergoes the cruelty, and often the cruelty is owed in equal parts to both—which, of course, does not justify it nor at all diminish its horrific and totally negative nature. Meanwhile, the archæologist wound up his speech with these words: "The Mongols . . . you Europeans should be grateful for being saved by us Russians, who met and stopped the impetus of the Mongolian fury." A just and historically exact reflection, yet, so I thought, equally unconsoling. In fact the fury was not due to brute force, but rather to a way of conceiving life and thus also politics and war. Tomorrow this mentality of the lost centuries could surge up again, new and unforeseeable, no longer in Asia, but at the very frontiers, today so uncertain and shifting, of Europe itself.

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Dwight Macdonald

Amateur Journalism

Notes of an American in London

ONE is impressed and depressed by many things—the beauty of the parks; the dome of St. Paul's; the splendour of Hampton Court and the squalor of cheap restaurants; the comfort of the Underground, the taxis, the theatres; the discomfort of the climate, the money, the pubs. But one is at once impressed by, and continues to marvel at, the fact that there are seven weekly publications which are worth reading regularly; and not only worth reading (in the sense one feels one ought to) but interesting to read. These notes are mostly about *The Economist*, *The Listener*, *The New Statesman and Nation*, *The Observer*, *The Spectator*, *The Sunday Times*, and *The Times Literary Supplement*—plus two dailies on the same level, *The Times* and *The Manchester Guardian*. The dailies are less surprising to an American, since we have a number of comparable papers (except for their coverage of art, music, theatre, and books), such as the *Times* and *Herald Tribune* of New York, *The Washington Post*, *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, and *The Christian Science Monitor*.

But there is nothing like these weeklies in America. In the thirties, *The Nation* and *The New Republic* were written for and read by "everybody" interested in ideas, politics, and art. But their bemusement by the Soviet myth isolated them from an increasingly large section of their readers and contributors—the Moscow Trials and similar issues split the American intelligentsia much more deeply than the British—and their clinging to the platitudes of liberal orthodoxy in the forties and fifties has not repaired the damage. They are now shrunken, drearily predictable, and of little interest to most American intellectuals. There are other comparable magazines, of course—*Harper's*, *The Atlantic*, *The Reporter*, *The Saturday Review*, to name the most widely read—but these are all more or less vitiated by the "middlebrow" approach, that is, they are edited with a wary eye on an amorphous public whose tastes and interests fluctuate somewhere between lowbrow and highbrow. This means at best a compromise between quality and "what the readers will take" and at worst a genteel slickness that is more trying than the simple vulgarity of the lowbrow press.

The English weeklies are not exactly highbrow—their circulations are too large, their writing too relaxed, their spirit too clearly that of a confident and sizeable social group rather than of an embattled minority—but they are not in the least middlebrow, either. I think they may best be described as "amateur." The word has acquired a pejorative overtone, in this businesslike, science-minded civilisation. No one is insulted if he is called a professional or an expert, but

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nobody likes to be brushed off as an amateur, usually with "mere" in front. But the amateur is not necessarily inferior in skill to the professional; the difference between them is simply that the former does because he wants to what the latter does for pay. In journalism, this means that the amateur is less vulnerable to the pressure of the market, and so to what I regard as the most corrupting influence on art and letters today, that of the cheap cultural goods sold in bulk to the mass public. The amateur may not know as much about any particular subject as the expert does, but what he does know (which may be rather impressive) he knows as part of his own life and of our culture in general, instead of in the narrow way the specialist knows it. Even those who fling "amateur" about as a term of abuse complain of the increasing tendency for knowledge to be subdivided into a myriad of special fields that are each worked intensively without much relation to the whole. The amateur, even the dilettante, would seem a necessary figure if our culture is not to dry up into academicism. The London weekly press is delightfully amateurish in spirit. (I am aware that, in literal fact, its editors and writers are paid, but the pay seems much less the central motive than is the case in America.) This, I think, is what gives it its special distinction.

Gentlemen v. Players

THE brutal snobbery of this Victorian way of discriminating between athletes is, of course, intolerable, and it is hard today to imagine a society in which half the players in a game would concede such an invidious distinction to the other half. But it did express something attractive about the British cult of the amateur: that certain activities should be pursued "for the sake of the game" only, not for profit and not even for success.* In writing, the cult of the amateur has much to recommend it. Americans write as professionals, either as scholars concerned with academic advancement (whence the barbarous jargon, the cramped, cautious specialisation of the academic quarterlies) or as professional journalists—and, more important, editors—concerned with attracting as wide and profitable an audience as possible (whence the hard, sleek superficiality of the non-academic press). But the book reviews, the drama and art criticism, and the articles in the London weeklies seem to me to be written with that pleasurable spontaneity, that recklessness (oddly combined, for an American, with a most impressive expertise) which comes when the writer is not trying to educate his readers or to overawe them or to appease them or to flatter them, but is treating them as equals, fellow-members of a clearly defined group of people who share certain common interests and certain common knowledge. Since he is not writing to impress his academic colleagues, he can write simply, informally, personally, sticking his neck as far out as he likes. Since he is not writing for a mixed audience whose lowest common denominator he must always keep in mind, he doesn't have to go in for elaborate explanations of the obvious, nor does he have to capture the reader's attention with a startling journalistic "lead" and try to keep it with debased rhetorical devices and constant appeals to the l.c.d.

Oddly enough, considering the informality of American manners, our writing is much stiffer than English writing, more artificial, removed to a greater distance from the reader, since an easy, personal style is risky with an amorphous audience. English reviewers speak in their own individual voices —the headlong rush of Pritchett, the neat, balanced style of Connolly—and yet are clear and to the point, like good conversationalists. Sometimes this personal manner goes over the edge and we get the facile bravura of Kingsley Amis, or passages like the following:

> *Though her most discerning admirers rave about "Claudine à l'École," I must admit that it is my least favourite of her novels—so little charm and* joie de vivre, *so much lechery and*

* The old-style British athletes were appalled by the fact that competitors from upstart regions like Australia and America actually trained for an athletic contest, sometimes going so far as to make a study of technique; the shock was not lessened by the fact that the upstarts usually won.

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sharpness! The lanky Anais, the stupid Marie Belhomme, the Lesbian headmistress and her flirtatious doxy, the bottom-pinching, ear-tweaking Superintendent . . . what a ruttish lot they all are! The peaches and cats and nectarines and crowded summer nights of the later books have been contracted to a crowd of simian little girls, ogling, simpering, whining, nibbling at blue lead pencils and cigarette papers. Zero de Conduite *for Colette!*

This is not very convincing, yet even this kind of teddy-boyishness is better than the cautious impersonality so common in American reviewing. English critics actually criticise; they are much more severe on shoddy work than their American colleagues, who go in mostly for summarising the contents (even of novels) and showing they know where to pigeon-hole the work, and often forget to mention what they thought of it. Judgments like the following are rare across the Atlantic:

But there is, about most of this book, such a dilettante air, such evidence of sheer ignorance of recent critical trends, such consistent avoidance of anything alive and growing that one's tolerance is admittedly strained to the limit.

* * *

This book is sad stuff—obtuse, dull, ill-made. It is a relief to turn to Major Shepphard's book, so neatly written and constructed.

* * *

It is impossible to say at the end of the book what Dr. Meissner believes about almost any of the various aspects of education he has written about, while his expeditions into theology and moral philosophy are, to put it gently, obscured by a thick haze of verbal confusion.

Nor is it that American critics, though cautious, are more scholarly; on the contrary, the knowledge of his subject shown by the average English reviewer is far greater; reading the articles on art and music in the London *Times* and *The Manchester Guardian* after years of having to put up with the thin gruel provided in these departments by *The N.Y. Times* and *The N.Y. Herald Tribune* is like turning from *Reader's Digest* to the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (that is, the old eleventh edition, before we Americans got hold of it).

Scholarly Dilettantes

THE amateur's interests, by definition, are wide-ranging since they include whatever he cares for (*amo*), and one can care for more aspects of life than one can know as an expert. When it is also considered that, as will be shown later, there are roughly only two publics in Britain—the classes and the masses—as against a great many in America, one can understand why American magazines are more specialised than their British equivalents.* Thus the American businessman reads *Barron's Weekly* and *The Wall Street Journal* for current business news, *Fortune* for longer-range stuff, *Time* for a systematic review of the news in general, and, if he is odd enough to be interested in books, some literary magazine for that. But the City man gets it all in *The Economist*, which also, unlike our business magazines, is read by many non-businessmen because it covers and comments on the week's events more thoroughly than any other weekly does; its overseas news is remarkably full; and its book section is excellent—it had the best brief review I have seen of the Burrows book on the Dead Sea scrolls—and covers not only economic books but also biographies, literary criticism, philosophy, etc. The one-ness of the London reading public is shown not only by a business magazine's having so broad a range but also by the existence of weekly departments on business in *The Spectator* and *The New Statesman*; it is quite impossible to imagine such a thing in *The Nation* and *The New Republic*.

Similarly, in America the contact between scholars and non-scholars is slight; there are two worlds in literature, for instance, the academic, with its professional journals, and the lay, which reads *The Saturday Review*, the "little" magazines, and the Sunday book

* An exception is *Punch*, which prints only humorous material, in contrast to *The New Yorker*, which also, and indeed chiefly, prints fiction, poetry, and reportage. This seems to me a more workable formula: the funny-bone begins to ache when it is struck too consistently, the humorous note to become a little thin and forced; while *The New Yorker's* serious material is a relief from the cartoons and jokes (and, of course, vice versa).

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sections of *The Times* and *Herald Tribune*. But in England learning is not the province of specialists but the common possession of the whole educated class. So one gets that remarkable institution, *The Times Literary Supplement*, which every week publishes general articles and reviews of a quality and authority achieved in America only occasionally in some "little" magazine or academic quarterly, and also covers such specialised works as *Histoire de la Boîte à Musique et de la Musique Mécanique*, a Swiss work priced at £7 10s., *Historia de la Literatura Chilena* (Santiago), and *Bibliografia di Bernard Berenson* (Milan), this last being treated in the front-page lead article.

One special aspect of what might be called amateur expertise is the amount of highly-informed comment on events in other parts of the world that appears in the British press. Our own coverage is comparatively thin and the interpretation comparatively provincial, with the important exception of *The New York Times*. Reading the London weeklies, and the *Times* and *Guardian*, is to be constantly reminded that one is at the centre of what was until recently a world empire. It is taken for granted that readers know what, and where, the Trucial States are, what is the difference between an emir and an emu, and that what was Benares in Kipling's day is now called Banaras. These reports combine great knowingness with off-hand comments from an *echt*-British point of view, revealing that combination of insularity (as to evaluation) and cosmopolitanism (as to knowledge) which has long made the Englishman abroad a confusing figure to the *indigènes*:

> *The Protectorate states produce almost nothing, and often seem quite incorrigibly addicted to the pleasures of violence and deceit. The conscientious Englishman, having discovered Upper Aulaki on his map, may well go on to wonder why on earth a harassed British government wants to have anything to do with this disagreeable backwater.*

This freedom with off-the-cuff value judgments is another characteristic of amateur journalism, and is not common practice in the American press, which has a sober, professional abhorrence of what it calls "editorialising." Our papers report the sessions of Congress, for example, in cold factual detail; interpretation is left to the editorial columns. But a British newspaper treats Parliamentary debates as if they were sporting events, noting who was in good form and "editorialising" all over the place with the jaunty expertise that in America is permitted only in a report on the latest Giant *v.* Dodgers game. Thus a recent front-page story in *The Daily Telegraph* led off with what to the American eye was a shocking, if fascinating, slug of pure opinion:

> *Foreign affairs plodded along at a humdrum jogtrot in the House of Commons tonight. The debate was cosy and undistinguished.*
>
> *The Prime Minister's opening statement was slightly marred by a throat affliction, for which he apologised to the House. This may also have accounted for a notable lack of vigour in his arguments.*
>
> *It is often possible for accomplished orators to disguise the unoriginality of their subject-matter by the resounding force of their delivery. This resource was not at Sir Anthony's command today.*

Class Lines in Culture

THE London mass-circulation newspapers come as something of a shock to an American, accustomed to the relatively high standards in typography, lay-out, and content of *The New York Daily News* (a remarkably competent, clever job, given the standards of mass journalism—which, of course, should not be given, or accepted), *The Chicago Tribune*, and even the Hearst papers. (*The Telegraph* is an exception; although its circulation is large, it is on a level comparable to *The Times* and the *Guardian*—and most American papers.) A glance at one of these "newspapers," with myriads of tiny trivial items swarming confusedly over the front page, with heads in a jumble of sizes and styles that recall an old-fashioned patent-medicine throwaway or the most amateurish efforts of one of our schools of journalism, with dingy blots of news-photos and ads and cartoons and maps and weather reports and Late News Bulletins all smothering

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each other like plants in a South American rain-forest (sometimes desperately fenced off with boxes), a glance at this welter of civilisation is enough to make one want to do a Lawrence, T. E. or D. H. A recent front page of *The Daily Express* contained twenty-nine different items, including "Six New Admirals Named" (with tiny figures of six admirals under the head, to give it more punch); a small map of the Levant with an arrow pointing to Jerusalem labelled "ISRAEL SAID TO BE MASSING TROOPS," this in connection with a major item, "From Our Diplomatic Correspondent," all of five inches long, that began "King Hussein's Arab Legion looked to its guns last night as threats of new trouble flashed across the Middle East and caused a diplomatic flurry in London" (nothing happened); and a one-inch item, "LET THE QUEEN STAY WITH US," which revealed that a Canadian M.P. had "suggested" that the Queen should live in Canada "three to five months every four years." A recent front page of *The News Chronicle*, which I gather is considered rather a highbrow paper of its kind, had twenty-five items in almost as many sizes and faces of type, while *The Evening News* hit the jackpot with fifty different front-page stories, including such enigmatic bulletins as "THEY STOLE SHIRTS. . . . Shirts were stolen during the night from E. and K. Thomas, drapers, in Blyth-road, **West Kensington**. The thieves made two other break-in attempts in the same block." With the mass periodicals put out frankly for entertainment—the above papers are, in theory, engaged in giving the news—the comparison is the same. *Life* is in every way—technically, æsthetically, and in the cultural level of its articles—far above *Picture Post*; the score of disreputable scandal magazines that have arisen in America since the success of *Confidential* are much more sophisticated, in typography and content, than such British opposite-numbers as *Weekend Reveille*; and there is nothing but nothing in America to compare with that malformed colossus of the British press, *The News of the World*.

The excellence of some of the press in London is connected, I think, with the degradation of the rest. The gap reflects, and in fact is only made possible by, the gulf between the classes.* In England there is hardly any middlebrow press. But in America, where class distinctions are fuzzier, highbrow culture competes with mass culture, merges into it in a subtle and bewildering and demoralising way. Except for the scholarly journals and a few "little" magazines like *Partisan Review*, there is no distinctively highbrow, or serious, press and each periodical finds its place in the infinitely graduated spectrum between low-middlebrow and high-middlebrow.

Mass Journalism: the Real Problem

LIBERAL intellectuals in England and in America are worried because the circulation of serious journals is in the tens of thousands while that of mass magazines is in the millions. While it would admittedly be cheering if the figures were reversed, I think this anxiety overdone for several reasons: (1) an audience of fifty or even five thousand is large enough for all practical purposes (that is, for the communication of art and ideas to a public large enough not to be monolithic and ingrown); (2) a smaller audience on a higher level will be more affected by what it reads than a larger audience on a lower level, partly because the material itself will be more significant, more able to "make a difference" to them, and partly because they will be intelligent enough to let it make more of a difference; (3) the smaller group will be in general more articulate, energetic, intelligent, and powerful (that is, with higher status and more important jobs) than the masses who drowse over *The News of the World* or the American tabloids, and so it will make more of a difference what they read. This line of

* In America, one's accent "places" one as to—place. The Southern drawl, the Midwestern nasal tone, the clipped New England twang, the brisk, brutal New York delivery, all are social equals. But in England the "right" accent is one and indivisible. A most unsnobbish father confessed to me that he had to send his children to "good" schools, at no matter what scraping and scrimping economies, simply because he couldn't bear to hear them talking with the accent they would pick up in the free State schools.

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thought is obnoxious to conventional liberals because it is "undemocratic" (they really mean inegalitarian, not the same thing at all, since, as the Nazis and Communists have demonstrated, levelling can produce a most undemocratic mass society), but it may nonetheless have some validity.

What seems to me alarming is not the contrast between the circulations of the highbrow and the lowbrow periodicals, but rather the influence of the latter on the former, the gravitational pull that is exerted by a large body (of money, or readers) on a much smaller one. This pull is greater in America than in England because of the blurring of class lines and consequently of cultural traditions—defining a tradition as a code held to not out of conviction (as a principle is held) but for the much deeper, more stubbornly resistant reason that it is simply the way one is. A journal like *The Times Literary Supplement* seems to be edited and read by people who know who they are and what interests them. That the vast majority of their fellow-citizens do not share their interest in the development of English prose, the bibliography of Belorussia, André Gide's treatment of his wife, the precise relation of folksong and plainsong, and "the large blot" in a letter of Dr. Johnson's which has given much trouble to several of his editors, to cite some matters gone into quite thoroughly in the issue of September 14th last—this seems not in any way to trouble them. But the editors and readers of the *T.L.S.'s* opposite number in America, *The Saturday Review*, have no such clear notion of their cultural identities and interests. The editors feel the pressure of competition with *Time*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, and the other great middlebrow commercial magazines—it is hard just to get on the news-stands, the commercial slicks being so much more numerous than is the case in England. Nor do their readers have a very clear idea of their cultural identity, lacking a tradition that will fence them off from the vigorously proliferating jungle of the mass media, so that a graduate student will drop *Collier's* to pick up *Kenyon Review* (or, more likely, the other way around). It is felt, also, that there is something snobbish, perhaps even un-American about ignoring the popular press, as indeed there is. The effect of the gravitational pull of mass media on the highbrow press in America is illustrated by the evolution of *Harper's* and *The Atlantic*. In the 19th century these magazines were the organs of an élite,* printing Emerson, James, Henry Adams, Howells, and Lowell and maintaining a dignified level of taste and thought (if it was also rather stuffy, this was because it was a somewhat provincial élite). They both have now slicked themselves up to become the competitors of the commercial magazines. A modern Adams or James would not find sympathetic reception in these streamlined journals, nor in any other American magazines of sizeable circulation—until he became famous, of course, as in the case of Hemingway and Faulkner.

If one wants to publish a serious article in America—that is, something one takes seriously as an expression of one's own special way of looking at things—there are three possibilities. One is the academic quarterlies, which range from purely professional journals like *Psychiatry*, *The Review of Politics*, and *The Journal of the History of Ideas* to more general organs like *Yale Review*, *Virginia Quarterly*, and *Foreign Affairs*. Another possibility is the "little" magazines, which are subsidised by individuals (*Partisan*, *Hudson*) or organisations (as *Commentary*, which is published by the American Jewish Committee) or which come out of some campus (*Kenyon*, *Sewanee*, *Accent*, *Chicago*.)† The

* "Élite" and "tradition" are used here in a cultural as well as a social sense. The relation of the two meanings is complicated, since the social is by no means synonymous with the cultural aristocracy, but I think it can be said that class lines make it easier for a cultural élite to survive. Certainly the two countries where "mass culture" has most corrupted and stifled the real article are the two in which traditional class lines have been almost wholly wiped out, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.

† Both these types flourish far more abundantly in America than in England, in curious contrast to the feebleness of our weekly press. (I can't think why this should be so.) The American thus has at least one advantage over the English writer—he has many more places in which to publish long, ambitious articles. The almost complete absence of such

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third is *The New Yorker*, which, although it is one of the most profitable of the commercial magazines, is edited with less worry about the reactions of its readers (more accurately, of a hypothetical reader who exists only in the editor's mind and who always seems to be less intelligent than any actual reader one meets) than are middlebrow magazines like *Harper's* or *The Reporter*. It therefore permits the writer to express himself without regard for the conventions of American journalism, taking the space he needs, using long sentences, interesting syntax, and difficult words, and going into all kinds of recondite by-ways simply because the subject seems to lead there. At least, such has been my experience. I think this is because *The New Yorker's* audience, though large—its circulation is around 300,000—is, like the audience of *The Economist* or *The Spectator*, clearly defined as to tastes and interests. The definition was made by the late Harold Ross, who founded the magazine and edited it until his death a few years ago, and expresses a peculiar kind of snobbishness, neither intellectual nor social, in fact directed against both, and yet partaking of both. It is a "we happy few who know the good things in life" affair that is expressed perfectly in the first cover (which is repeated once a year) showing the magazine's incarnation, "Eustace Tilley," an old-fashioned dandy in a top-hat and high collar, lifting his monocle to inspect a hovering butterfly. Within this plot of artificial grass, fenced off from American mass culture as the more natural English enclosure is fenced off, some freedom of expression is possible. There are serpents in this Eden: the magazine's own "formula" is often monotonous and over-restrictive, and the editorial pencils sometimes fly too busily. But the thoroughness with which *The New Yorker* violates the canons of professional middlebrow journalism is always inspiriting. Timeliness is disregarded in a regal way: books are reviewed long after they have appeared; topical articles are held for months; comment rather than news is the aim. The make-up is wildly unprofessional: nothing is "featured," on the cover or inside; the contributions run on consecutively, with the author's names at the end in small type; there is not even a table of contents. *The New Yorker* is, in effect and in its editors' minds, a weekly letter to its readers, whose tastes are disregarded simply because they are assumed to be those of the editors and writers who compose the letter.

articles is the chief weakness of the London weeklies; 2,000 words is their usual top and, for some kinds of writers and themes, this is not enough room to turn around in. There is an exaggerated fear of being "heavy" or "boring," but some ideas, and writers, are "heavy" by nature, often the greatest—would Marx, Freud, or Kierkegaard have been able to make *The Spectator*, one wonders—and an unrelieved diet of short, graceful articles has its own kind of monotony. It seems odd that an important literary critic like F. R. Leavis, because he writes long, weighty articles, appears in *Commentary* but not in the British weeklies.

The Family Circle

THE special quality of British literary journalism is related to the existence in London of a close-knit intellectual community. "What has astonished me, and what astonishes any American," Irving Kristol wrote in ENCOUNTER after he had been a while in London, "is the extent to which almost *all* British intellectuals are cousins. . . . In America it is otherwise, to put it mildly. . . . It is by no means impossible that the senior editors of *The New Yorker* should never have met the senior editors of *Time*." As an alumnus of both these magazines, I can testify this is accurate; intellectual circles in New York are neither concentric, interlocking, nor tangential, and one knows "personally" (the very expression suggests the American lack of contact) only a small proportion of the authors whose books and articles one reads. The London intellectual community is much broader, including businessmen, lawyers, and even publishers, even Members of Parliament; most literary parties of any size produce an M.P. or two, but in New York one could write about politics for years without seeing a Congressman except in the newsreels.

Indeed, "community" is too mild; it is more like a family, a large, variegated family,

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serious-minded but with a strong sense of play. They know the family jokes (what is "Butskellism"?), the eccentric uncles (G.B.S.), the ancestors (several weeklies have recently discussed at length whether a 17th century man of science named Robert Hooke was a nice man or not). They are very much concerned with preserving the old home and with the proper appreciation of its charms; John Betjeman and Geoffrey Grigson are in constant communication with their cousins on the matter, sounding alarms about proposals to alter the landscape or to tear down some interesting structure, describing some nook in the great old pile, some country village or remote island or city vista that they feel has not been enough appreciated. They love to play intellectual games together; each week *The Spectator* and *The New Statesman* set their readers a task and print the winning entries; these are almost always witty and ingenious; it appears that every Englishman is born with a silver pen in his mouth.

The two most striking examples of family journalism are *The Listener* and *The Times*. The former is, of course, notable because it consists entirely (except for an excellent book section, whose reviews, like those of the *T.L.S.*, are unsigned*) of material from radio programmes; a magazine on such a level as *The Listener*, and drawn only from this source, would in America have to appear not weekly but annually. *The Listener* is family talk around the tea-table. The elders reminisce; the learned uncles discuss Kant or Josephus, without either pedantry or condescension; the cousins in Parliament or on the press analyse current events; those with a taste for exploring or gardening or book-collecting talk about their hobbies; someone who has picked up some curious information on Scottish architecture or the migration of herring passes it along; there is talk about books and art and cooking.

As for *The Times*, it is the quintessence of family journalism, devoting its first page entirely to classified ads (the petty concerns of the individual take precedence over wars and revolutions), and presenting the news in a remarkably confusing and illogical form simply because that is the way it has always been done and the members of the family know their way around in it as well as they know the way the furniture is placed in the living-room. Topicality is not a fetish; special articles may be on the Suez crisis or on the battle of Poitiers; the latter type I find the more interesting, and so, I suspect, do the readers. A topic has to have some "news peg" from which to hang, in the professional American press, but in England it is merely a question of whether it interests a reading public whose tastes the editors know intimately because they share them. The readers of *The Times*, as might be expected in this kind of journalism, supply much of the paper's interest. There is, of course, the famous letters column, which the leader of Her Majesty's Opposition may use to pose awkward questions to the party in power (as Mr. Gaitskell did recently) or which a sportsman may use to protest against some local regulation prohibiting trout-tickling (as also happened recently). Even more typical is the custom of writing letters to *The Times* about distinguished friends who have recently died. These letters appear in the Obituary column and are not, as one might expect, the usual conventional pieties, but are thoughtful, moving, and full of interest (the English knack for the concrete detail and the English concern for truth at all costs come out in this unlikely context) even though they may end "He will leave an irreplaceable gap" or "Truly, as one of his biographers remarked, we shall never look upon his like again." This custom, unknown in America, where writing

* This sort of anonymity is interestingly different from that of *Time* magazine. *Time* writers don't sign their work because it isn't theirs; they are the middle workers on an assembly line that begins with their researchers and ends with a corps of editors who blue-pencil and rewrite until the final product has the glossy, brash, dynamic *Time* style. English anonymity doesn't imply collective fabrication; it is just that the family is so closely knit that "everybody" knows who wrote last week's *T.L.S.* lead articles, just as "everybody" knows who "Pharos" and "Strix" in *The Spectator* are and that Kingsley Martin writes the London Diary in *The New Statesman*.

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is a matter for the professionals (though, to adapt Clemenceau, it is really too important a matter to be left to writers), implies that the readers of *The Times*, as well as the friends who take the trouble to compose the letters, feel close enough to the dead to want to keep their memory alive a little. It is a family affair.

Family Quarrels

"WE SHALL be obliged to explain away the ugly fact that nearly all English writers and editors are on speaking terms," wrote V. S. Pritchett recently, apropos the then-impending P.E.N. congress in London and the questions that would be asked about English intellectual life. In the thirties, the friendly personal relations between pro- and anti-Stalinists in London used to bewilder us New York radicals. Even anarchists, with us a wretched little sect looked on by all the Marxist groups—when they thought about such oddities—as contemptuously as if they were Holy Rollers or Seventh Day Adventists, even they seemed to have their accepted place in the English political zoo. Our tone was quite different; New York was more of a jungle than a zoo. To us it was inconceivable that the Communist lion could lie down, even for a tactical moment, with the Trotskyist political cat, or that issues like the Moscow Trials and the rôle of the Communists in the Spanish Civil War could be discussed in an amicable spirit. The Communists formally prohibited their people from "fraternising with the class enemy"—a Party member who was detected talking with a Trotskyist in a Fourteenth Street cafeteria in anything but an exasperated shout was liable to expulsion. We Trotskyists had no such rule and in fact deplored such "bureaucratic monolithism"—we were, in a way, more in the English style—but words like "betrayal," "frame-up," "sell-out," "counter-revolution," and "GPU falsification" leaped to our tongues and pens. We regarded our English colleagues with a mixture of envy, contempt, and amusement. Either they were not serious, or we were too much so.*

Things don't seem to have changed much. One finds John Strachey and Clement Attlee writing in the neo-conservative *Spectator*, which on such issues as Cyprus and Suez criticises the Tory government quite as freely as the liberal-progressive *New Statesman*. The continuing success of the latter, in contrast to the desiccated state of the *Nation* and *New Republic*, is due not to any greater perspicacity on the Stalinist issue but rather to the typically British way it has avoided going to extremes. Guided by the skilful journalistic touch of Kingsley Martin (a cool operator, very different from such an American counterpart as the embattled Freda Kirchwey), it has trimmed its sails to the moderate winds of English political feeling. After the Moscow Trials, the American left intellectuals split into two sharply opposed camps, with the balance steadily swinging toward the anti-Communists as time went on; the liberal weeklies, less supple than *The New Statesman* and also confronted with a less easily bridged gap, became increasingly the prisoner of the anti-anti-Communists; *The New Republic* did break six or seven years ago, but its declaration of independence came too late; people had got out of the habit of reading the liberal weeklies. But *The New Statesman* is read by "everybody"; its softheadedness on Russia is offset by strong and

* I think, on the whole, it was they who were not serious enough. Not because the English spirit was not as sensitive as ours to the inhumanities and injustices of Stalinism (on the contrary, if anything), but because it seems to be hard for an English intellectual to take abstract ideas seriously. Unhappily much of the appeal of Stalin's (or Khrushev's) Russia to the rest of the world, which doesn't share the British phlegm about abstract ideas, has been the philosophical-moral system created by Marx and the socialists and illegitimately usurped by the Soviet Communists. One thing one does miss in London is a keen interest in general ideas such as one finds in the Continental intellectual press and to some extent, though less than formerly, in our own. The recent exchange between V. S. Pritchett and Arthur Koestler in *The New Statesman* was interesting in this context—Pritchett just couldn't understand how Koestler could get so passionate and intolerant about political theories—as was the absurd overestimation, by some of the most acute London critics, of Colin Wilson's *The Outsider*.

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varied cultural departments and by Mr. Martin's catholic editing; it has never become as shrill and one-sided as its American counterparts.

This is not to say that *The New Statesman* isn't the sister-under-the-smooth-British-skin of its American poor relations. Like them, it suffers from the pernicious anæmia of modern liberalism, a point of view that combines the worst features of tradition (as, stereotyped reactions) and utopian rebellion (as, lack of realism, moral smugness). The term should really be liberalistic, implying a vulgarisation and distortion of the original article, as with "modern" *v.* "modernistic." "Liberal" is a proud adjective, historically (Herzen, Emerson, John Stuart Mill) and etymologically ("open to the reception of new ideas," says the Shorter Oxford Dictionary). But it has been devaluated in our time, confused with "progressive" (toward the MVD labour camps?) and "democratic" (the plebiscitary dictatorships? the mediocrity of "public opinion"?). Comparing *The New Statesman* with *The Spectator*, I find the latter both more interesting and more admirable. It is more interesting because its "line" is less predictable than *The New Statesman's*, its writers often reacting to the actual situation, which never quite fits into any preconceived ideas, instead of to formulæ by the Fabians out of Marx. It is more admirable because it faces up to events instead of evading them.*

When Nasser moved in on Suez, *The Spectator* thought this was a matter of some importance to England and devoted a forthright (and, it must be admitted, rather indignant) first-page editorial to the subject. *The New Statesman*, reacting in routine fashion as the professional friend of the colonial underdog, felt that the obvious first-page editorial for the issue after Suez was a denunciation of British misdeeds in the Seychelles Islands. "A STRONG SMELL FROM THE SEYCHELLES" it boldly headlined. Suez was discreetly embalmed on page four in a turgid editorial which got around to mentioning the unpleasantness in its forty-first line, and then went on to blame it all on the U.S. State Department, "which has effectively provoked the crisis" by refusing to finance Colonel Nasser's dam. Similarly, the *Statesman* gave the Poznan uprising its page-four treatment, while *Spectator*, again reacting to actuality and unhampered by previous ideological commitments—the liberals have their own tradition by now, an ever-lengthening burden of mistakes, disasters, and betrayals that drags after them like Marley's iron chain of ledgers and cash-boxes—hailed the workers of Poznan on page one. The most characteristic passages, both in style and content, were: (1) "These events must pose once again for the rulers of Eastern Europe the revolutionary dilemma stated in its most lapidary form by Saint-Just: *'Un gouvernement a la vertu pour la principe; sinon la terreur. Que veulent ceux qui ne veulent ni*

* Or, as in the case of the reportage by John Freeman on the satellite countries in the July 21st *Statesman*, distorting them to fit the formula. Under the interesting title, "A Profile of the People's Democracies"—interesting because "people's democracy" is the cant phrase devised by the Moscow Office of Public Relations (to translate freely) for certain political operations that sound better that way—Mr. Freeman wrote a kind of inter-office memo to the Communist gauleiters of Eastern Europe. He gave them full credit, and perhaps a bit more, for the post-Stalin "thaw" and advised them, for prudential reasons, to liberalise their policies still more. One had the general impression that it was all an experiment in socialism, conducted in the spirit of the Webbs, and that if only outside critics would pipe down, the people of Eastern Europe could stride into the Dawn of a New Era arm in arm with their Fabian shepherds. Mr. Freeman was quite definite as to who are the saboteurs of progress—Radio Free Europe, the Voice of America, and "even some of the BBC programmes," plus the *émigrés*. In short, almost everybody outside the satellites who is concerned with their problems. His advice to the *émigrés* is blunt: Shut Up or Go Home. "All those who now choose to remain abroad should understand that, by doing so, they are losing any influence they may once have enjoyed among their compatriots. It is, after all, difficult for Poles or Czechs who have to sweat it out at home to feel respect for those who, from the shelter of a hostile country, promote activities which are at best aimed at sabotaging the system and which can easily lead to bloodshed and reprisals." One wonders what Herzen or Lenin, who promoted activities from the shelter of a hostile country aimed at sabotaging an earlier—and how much milder!—Russian despotism, would have said to such advice. Indeed, one knows. But of course they were opposed to the despots and were not taken in by cant about Holy Russia, the Czarist equivalent of People's Democracy.

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la vertu ni la terreur?' If relaxation of the terrible pressure exercised by Communist States on their citizens is followed by blind outbursts of protest, how can the necessary evolution of society proceed except in convulsions?" (2) " 'The time has come,' a very representative group of Labour M.P.s has written to the Polish president, 'when all citizens of our great continent should enjoy liberty . . . and an adequate standard of life.' The Polish government should realise that Socialists everywhere will endorse this appeal for 'generous restraint' and understand that any 'cooperation for peace and reconstruction' depends on its answer." Readers of ENCOUNTER are invited to guess which passage appeared in which journal, also to distinguish which is an "insider" and which an "outsider" reaction; there will be no prizes.

Sir,—

As COMMON law is the quintessence of British justice and boiled vegetable marrow that of British cooking, so the peculiar, and great, contribution of the English to journalism is the letter-to-the-editor. It fits into my thesis in several ways: it is strictly amateur, being produced free, gratis, and without cost; it is a cosy, family-circle kind of communication; and it affords full scope for the sort of informal writing at which the English excel. In each of the weeklies and dailies I am considering here the letters section is given a prominent place—usually the individual letters are listed in the table of contents—and I find myself turning to it first. Its contents are varied, exciting, amusing, instructive, or just simply odd.

There seems to be something especially congenial to the English temperament about the act of writing a letter-to-the-editor. The form has been developed to a high pitch through the generations, and is now capable of great flexibility, ranging from one-sentence grace notes ("Sir,—England needs quality, not equality. Yours faithfully. . . .") to such lengthy and complex fugues as the many-voiced discussion, lasting weeks in *The Spectator*, of the place of the Virgin Mary in Catholic theology. There are letters by everybody from Marie Stopes to Lord Astor about everything from the Suez crisis to the reason circus rings are 42 ft. in diameter. There are letters from politicians whose bills have been criticised ("Sir,—You have honoured me by commenting on the Bill I have introduced, so I hope you will afford me a little space. . . .") and from authors whose books have been criticised — who, being authors, employ a wide variety of styles from Ironic Elaborate ("Sir,—I have always admired the creative imagination of many of your book reviewers, but never more so than in Paul Johnson's review of my book, *Time and Place*, in your columns last week. . . .") to Bar-Room Blunt ("Sir,—How bitchy can a reviewer get?"). Letters from Indignant Readers: "Sir,—I do not understand why *The Spectator*, which is supposed to be an independent weekly, employs Mr. Charles Curran as its chief political commentator. He is about as independent of the Tory central office as a tortoise is of its shell." Letters from contributors who have been misunderstood: "Sir,—May I say that when I described Professor Oakeshott's inaugural lecture as 'a wily defence of the shabby against the new' I meant by 'shabby' 'time-worn' and not, as one reader supposed, 'underhand'?" Letters from writers of previous letters who feel they have been maltreated by writers of previous letters: "Sir,—I am sorry that Lord Esher has introduced a personal and offensive note into a correspondence that has hitherto been conducted on the level of principle. . . ." And, finally, letters which, in prose as in provenance, epitomise the art-form, as the following contribution to a discussion in *The Times* on the decline of the walking-stick (Am.: cane):

> *Sir,—Have your correspondents forgotten the solemn judgment of a Chinese sage upon the English, that even the best of them take a stick with them when they go for a walk? "For what purpose except to beat the innocent?"*
>
> *Yours, &c.,*
> GILBERT MURRAY.
> *Yatscombe, Boar's Hill, Oxford.*

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Peregrine Worsthorne

The New Inequality

More Dangerous than the Old?

SOME seventy-five years ago, in a paper read to the Cambridge Reform Club, Alfred Marshall posed the question "whether there be valid ground for the opinion that the amelioration of the working classes has limits beyond which it cannot pass." The question, he said, "is not whether all men will ultimately be equal—that they certainly will not—but whether progress may not go on steadily, if slowly, till, by occupation at least, every man is a gentleman." This question has indeed been answered in the affirmative. Not only have modern technological developments sharply diminished the need for degrading manual work, so that there is a tendency—which automation will surely encourage—for the whole population to develop into one vast white-collar class. The machine has also, by making possible the mass production of good-quality products at cheap prices and by the mass dissemination of popular culture through radio and television, largely destroyed the contrasts in life-styles that used to mark off one class from another. This process has been carried far further in the United States than it has here in England. But even in this country it is now difficult to tell the difference between, for example, the businessman's wife and his typist by the clothes they wear, the food they buy, the way they spend their evenings. In the U.S. it has even been found necessary to erect artificial consumer distinctions to divide one social grade from another. Managing directors, for example, drive Cadillacs, vice-presidents Buicks, and so on down the scale to foremen with De Sotos and wage-hands with Chevrolets and Plymouths. But to the uninitiated the differences between one powerful and luxurious limousine and another are more formal than real, just as the difference in privilege between a duke at the Court of Versailles, who was allowed to put on the King's slippers, and a vicomte who only handled the vest, were quite without any real content.

Class distinctions in this country are also increasingly blurred by shared welfare facilities that are made available to all. I do not mean by this simply that these services involve taxing the rich and subsidising the poor. This aspect of the equalising effect of the social services is probably far less important in the long run than the equality of experience which they have imposed on all classes. Nearly everyone today is a panel patient; all have learnt what it is to have an insurance card stamped, or to collect a pension or children's allowance from the post office. Today, the doctor's waiting-room has joined the confessional, the polling booth, and the law court as places where class distinctions count for nothing. As more and better council houses,

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and more and better State schools become available, the drawing-room and the schoolroom may be added to this list.

IT IS not surprising that this prospect should have gripped the imagination of some political leaders who are already talking as if the classless society were just around the corner. What, however, we tend to overlook is that the industrial methods needed to produce this material equality have also made necessary the organisation of industry into larger and larger units, which in turn has widened the gap between the *power* of those at the top of the hierarchy and those at the bottom. In the giant combines that today dominate the industrial scene, the chief executives, the managerial staff, and above all the small group of technicians and engineers who design and maintain the crucial machines on which everything now depends—this industrial élite enjoy a degree of potentially unfettered power to which the 19th century *entrepreneur* could never aspire. Although the workers are better organised than they have ever been before, the pivotal processes of industry depend less and less on their services. The steady draining away of the workers' fundamental bargaining power has been disguised by the fact that keeping wages down is no longer the principal concern of corporations: it is less important now to keep wages down than to use the new machines in increasing productivity per man hour. And it is less important to be near a supply of cheap labour than to have control of a patent pool. This shift in the competitive strategy of corporations, although it has seemed to augment the workers' bargaining power by leading to a free-and-easy attitude to wage demands, will in the long run have precisely the reverse effect.

The bargaining power of labour is also likely to be adversely affected by another development which, strange as it may seem, the workers are welcoming with open arms: the extension of wages into the field of social rights. Every discussion of wage rates and indeed professional salaries is now dominated by the notion of status. What *ought* an engine driver earn? Would twice as much as a platelayer be fair? "The claim," Professor T. H. Marshall has said, " is not merely for a basic living wage with such variations above that level as can be extracted by each grade from the conditions in the market at the moment. The claims of status are to a hierarchical wage structure, each level of which represents a social right and not merely a market value." Every British citizen now regards himself as having the right, inherent in his particular status, to a particular wage or salary. Since it is the prime duty of government to guarantee each citizen his rights, it follows that wages cannot be left to labour-management haggling, any more than a man's right to vote can be left to a bargain struck with the polling officer. The responsibility of determining what constitutes a just wage rests, therefore, in the last resort with the State. This shift from contract to status as a means of determining wage differentials has, to date, vastly benefited labour. But by invoking this right, labour has uncorked a genie that may be something less than benevolent. The State is obliged to accord each citizen his rights; but each citizen is precluded from demanding more than his rights. If wages are not the result of a bargain or contract, but are rather the reflection of what society considers to be a particular group's status rights, then for anyone to insist on higher wages may be comparable to his demanding more than one vote. Moreover, if wages are to be determined, like tax exemptions, on the ground of social value, the corresponding duties (in this case, efficiency, regularity of attendance, etc.) will need to become as obligatory as tax payments. This is indeed the direction in which we are moving.

I emphasise the increasing disparity between, on the one hand, the practical power of management and technicians in industry today, combined with the new authority over wages which the State is in the process of assuming, and, on the other hand, the declining strength of labour's bargaining position, because this is something which the new equality in consumer patterns tends to

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camouflage. Because the chief executive (and the trade union leader) wear the same suit as the packaging clerk, chuckle at the same comic strip, etc., it is dangerously easy to overlook the significant fact that in terms of power they are probably more widely separated today than the feudal baron and the serf.

In all fields of human activity, in politics, administration, commerce, voluntary organisations, and even entertainment, the power to take meaningful decisions is concentrated in fewer and fewer hands. Today, for example, instead of the countless small shops serving particular neighbourhoods, with innumerable individual merchants deciding how best to attract and influence local custom, we increasingly have giant chain stores, controlled by one central board of management, with mass centrally directed advertising replacing the personal interplay between individual customer and tradesman. Again, instead of innumerable independent *entrepreneurs* exercising absolute control over their privately owned concerns, we have massive State and private corporations whose broad policies are laid down by central directing boards. The power of management in a massive firm like, for example, Courtaulds, although limited by counter-balancing trade union strength in the fields of wages and work conditions, is truly dazzling in other directions. A decision, taken perhaps by two or three senior executives in London, to produce a new rayon can transform in a few months—as nylon actually did—the clothing habits of millions of women in every continent. To an extent that would have seemed incredible a few decades ago, modern management can, through centralised administration and marketing methods, revolutionise the habits, tastes, and even the environment of whole populations. If the old-fashioned aristocracies had the power to force people unwillingly to conform to their wishes, the modern industrial élites enjoy unique instruments of psychic manipulation that make people willingly behave as they want them to.

The same concentration of authority can be seen in the trade unions, with negotiations at the factory level largely replaced by decisions reached at the national level. In the armed forces the army commander of today can exert such detailed authority over subordinate formations that all intermediate chains of command have been vastly reduced in effective independence. In any future atomic war only the small group deciding where and when to drop the bombs will have any significant part to play in the conduct of affairs. The ease with which national leaders nowadays can address whole populations through radio and television networks has also gone far to concentrate the means of political persuasion at the top of the governmental hierarchy. During the Suez crisis it was the Prime Minister speaking to the nation, rather than M.P.s addressing their constituencies, who played the vital rôle in determining public opinion.

It may well be true, of course, that in a society made up of a few concentrated centres of power some kind of a balance is struck. Concentrated labour strength balances concentrated capital; the chain stores, with their monopoly over distribution, curb industrial corporations with their monopoly over production. But this, it seems to me, does not alter the fact that in all the main activities in which human beings are engaged the ratio between those who make the meaningful decisions and those who carry them out, between those whose lives are active and those whose lives are passive, between those who form opinions and those who receive them, gets steadily wider.

My point is that it is highly unwise to allow the increasing similarity—or apparent similarity—between the patterns of consumption at all levels in society to obscure this trend. Because the democratic five-star general, for example, wears a very similar uniform to the private and lives in very similar quarters, we all too easily forget that his actual control over the tens of thousands of men under his command is far greater than that exerted by the aristocratic Duke of Wellington over the press-ganged recruit. Modern technology has thrown up a smokescreen of consumer equality which obscures the growing abyss that cuts off the power

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élites in the military, industrial, and political fields from the masses.

ALL the current talk about an egalitarian and classless society, therefore, strikes me as either irrelevant nonsense or mischievous deception—propaganda put out by the aspiring élites to distract attention from the true developments. Equality, in fact, is replacing religion as the new opiate of the people. Just as medieval society asserted that equality at the altar rail excused inequality everywhere else, so today our new masters pretend that consumer equality in the chain store is the only equality that matters. I fear that the staggering extension of material equality in this century will afford the strong just as good excuses to exploit their power as did the idea of equality before God in the Middle Ages. The older strata of society are being destroyed, but they are being replaced by strata no less unequal for the fact that their inequality is less obvious.

Given the pattern of modern industrial society, the choice facing Britain is not between an inegalitarian class structure and an egalitarian classless society. It is between a society dominated by a hereditary governing class which is open to new talents, or a society dominated, at best by an ever-changing succession of élites, at worst by a self-perpetuating élite. English democratic socialists, as Mr. G. L. Arnold has recently pointed out, consistently evade this issue from fear of antagonising their labour allies and going against the egalitarian sentiment historically bound up with the Labour movement. But few others would deny that a modern economy requires a high degree of social stratification. Managers and technicians must be given encouragement similar to, though not always identical with, those obtained by the *entrepreneurs* in capitalist society. (Nowhere, perhaps, is this better recognised than in Russia.) Because in the last decade all the emphasis in this country has been on depriving the old upper and middle classes of their privileges it has been easy to ignore the fact that new élites with new privileges are growing up to take their places. This has enabled people like Mr. Gaitskell to advocate the abolition of class without having to defend the creation of élites. He can pretend that the classless society has all the virtues of bringing sections of the community closer together without admitting that a society divided into élites and non-élites also cuts off the many from the few, although on a different principle. But if we are honest and realistic, the choice we must make in the next few years is not between equality and inequality but between two different systems of social stratification. What I would like to suggest is that a class structure has, against an élite structure, certain virtues which a liberal society would be foolish to discard.

AT THE moment, of course, the scales are heavily weighted against the concept of class, not only by orthodox egalitarian sentiment, but also by the failure of the English ruling and owning class in the last twenty-five years to come to terms with the technological revolution. The great triumph of the English upper class, and the source of its toughness and cohesion, was the way in which the 18th century landed interests blended with, and tamed, the aspiring capitalist élites thrown up by the industrial revolution. Its great failing in recent years has been its inability to absorb and civilise the élites produced by the technological revolution. Not only have the owning classes in Britain been miserably slow in appreciating the industrial significance of technology and modern managerial skills; they have also, as a result of this blindness, failed to appreciate the need for winning the loyalty of the new social groups which this revolution has thrown up. Politicians, like generals, always fight their campaigns with weapons and strategy of previous wars. Because in recent political battles the workers have seemed the vital front on which to concentrate, neither party has bothered to enlist the loyalty and energies of the new crucial sector—the technologists, engineers, managers, whose skills hold the key to this country's future. Lord Woolton made a valiant effort in this direction but the Conservative Government have failed, once selected, to fulfil his implicit

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electoral promises. Society, with a capital S, which was once only too prone to embrace new wealth-producing élites, has shown little or no interest in their modern counterparts. The social frustrations of the Lucky Jims today are a revealing condemnation of the present class structure. Self-made dons—so long as they study the Humanities—barristers, journalists, politicians, can all be found dining and wining at the Establishment tables, but the new industrial élites are kept at a distance. This failure of Society to attract into its ranks the contemporary élite is the result not of rigidity so much as anæmia: fiscal bloodlettings not only drain away class wealth but also class responsibility. Nevertheless, the fact remains that in Britain today the upper class tends more and more to be seen as an obstacle standing in the way of ambition rather than the coveted goal on which ambitions are pinned.

This, then, may well be an occasion when an aspiring élite can, by expelling a previous governing class, revitalise the national life. History is full of such examples; and such élites, once they have achieved power, have usually themselves formed a new governing class. But it is one thing to believe that the social hierarchy requires reshuffling, for a particular purpose, at a particular stage in a country's development. It is quite another to argue that this process should be raised from a temporary expedient into a permanent principle. At the moment we are in danger of deciding that because egalitarianism is a useful instrument for reshuffling society at a given moment it is also suitable as a guiding principle for its long-term ordering.

The doctrine of equality can fulfil a vital rôle in breaking down an over-rigid class structure and in maintaining the necessary degree of social mobility. But a society that raises this secondary virtue to its principal objective is likely to defeat its own purpose. The exercise of power in a modern industrial State is far too comprehensive, far too easy, far too irresistible to be left to professional élites whose authority is undiluted by the habitual weaknesses and failings of a hereditary ruling class. Moreover, resistance to State power today can only be effective in a society where the lower strata contain men of independence and ability who, in a classless society stratified on a strict basis of merit, would have been creamed off at birth. I do not believe that, if Britain had been a classless society in the 19th century, the temptations to misuse the new sources of wealth would have been resisted by a governing élite any more than they were resisted by the governing class of the day. The only difference would have been that the workers, with their potential leaders creamed off into management, would never have organised the Labour movement.

We are now passing through a new technological revolution, quite as far-reaching socially as the industrial revolution, which will not only provide those in command with opportunities for exercising unprecedented power but also deprive those underneath of the stimulus of material want. I can think of no worse moment to initiate a social system that both disguises the exercise of power—by separating it from obvious and recognised social privilege—and makes resistance doubly hard by depriving the workers of both potential leadership and moral justification for opposing the State.

Let me admit at once that social class has two obvious disadvantages as a principle of dividing society. First, it allows a great many individuals of no social value to enjoy privileges which they have done nothing to deserve; secondly, it arouses resentments among those who would themselves enjoy these positions if ability rather than birth was the determining factor in social stratification. Class divisions, therefore, tend to be both socially inefficient and individually unjust, making for a badly run and discontented society. It seems to me, however, that the first thing that opponents of class must offer is some alternative system by which those most fitted by individual merit to wield power in the various fields—political, administrative, cultural, economic, religious, scientific, etc.—are picked out and appointed. This can be done by the State bureaucracy or by local

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councils on a strict basis of competitive examinations, or it can be done by the governing élites themselves on a basis of personal choice. In each case, however, some group or groups in society will have the power to decide which qualities justify promotion. Government by élites chosen on merit can only mean that those at the top at any given moment decide whom they will recruit to join them in their lofty eminence. It will be their decision, rather than birth or money, that determines whether or not a man makes good. They will set the examinations and correct the results. They will preside over the interviewing panels that separate the sheep from the goats. They will determine the qualities that justify recruitment into the élites. Promotion, in fact, will depend *entirely* on a man's ability and willingness to conform with the tastes, standards, and manners of his superiors. To be compatible with the men at the top it would be necessary to act like them, to think like them, to look like them, or at least to display oneself to them in such a way as to create that impression. If everyone is dependent absolutely on impressing his superiors—and in a society where everyone starts from scratch this is the case—then right from his earliest days each child will concentrate on fitting in with the prevailing patterns. Up to a certain point in the hierarchy, professional merit—formally determined by objective criteria and based on skilful performance of professional duties—might prevail. But the higher reaches of the hierarchy will always be kept for those who embody the political views and social mores of those already at the top. Conformity, in short, would become the one safe road to success.

Up to a point, of course, this is also how an upper class operates. We are all conscious of Old School Tie exclusiveness and class nepotism. But the very element of *hereditary* privilege which egalitarians criticise most fiercely guarantees that an upper class always includes a minority who can afford—put it no higher than that—the luxury of independence. Leaving aside the political benefits of a class strong enough and independent enough to stand up to the State power—what a massive debt, incidentally, English liberty owes to the Whig aristocracy!—it does seem to me of prime importance to preserve some elements in society from the need to make their own way in the world. A class system ensures that at least a few people without personal ambition reach positions of power and influence. The very irrationality of a class structure based on birth, the fact that the top level contains individuals both wise and foolish, able and inept, useful and useless, a cross-section in short of all the human virtues and vices, avoids that total lack of common understanding that would cut off an élite, based exclusively on merit, from the rest of society that had not made the grade.

An upper class may feel superior and a lower class may feel inferior; but how much more rigid and unfraternal would a society be in which those at the top not only felt but *were* superior and those at the bottom not only felt but *were* inferior—and knew it! The very evils of a society stratified by money or birth at least avoid the worst danger of all—a society dominated by men whose privileges are invulnerable because entirely deserved.

But let us assume, for the sake of argument, that a society stratified on a strict basis of merit is a desirable goal. The next problem facing the egalitarian would be how to prevent the élites at any given moment from solidifying their positions at the top? Historically, social classes began as élites whose initial privileges resulted from some function which they fulfilled for the visible advantage of society. The members of the original élites spread their privileges to their relations and children who, in turn, passed them down to *their* relations and children until, like a tree, each member of the original élite had produced a lush foliage of privilege casting its protective shadow down the centuries. In other words, a ruling class is an élite or a collection of élites which have grown over the generations into an organic body quite transcending the original purpose—military, administrative, etc.—for which they were formed. If generations were like stratified rocks, superimposed one on another but

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not interconnected, then it would be easy enough to organise society with exclusive reference to the individual merit of those who make up each new generation. But men are not born orphans and do not die bachelors. Each individual, being both child and parent, grandchild and grandparent, has interests that bridge many generations. So long, therefore, as the family remains the basic social unit any recognition of individual merit will inevitably set up a chain reaction leading to the formation of social classes.

One way, of course, for the egalitarian to escape this result would be to make sure that every member of society enjoyed more or less similar means. But this is to assume that potential élite members will exert their talents without any special rewards, for the pleasure of patriotism and public service. It is, of course, just possible to imagine a political élite governing for the sheer pleasure of power, or a military élite risking their lives for the glory of it, or artists producing great works because they feel the urge. But the creation of wealth, which is the crucial rôle of the bourgeois, is another question. Business, commerce, industry — none of these occupations is vocational. They attract simply as means of making money. For a country like Britain that depends so absolutely on industry and trade, it is essential that capable men enter these fields, which means they must hold out the prospect of profit. I think it only reasonable to assume, therefore, that in any social system suitable for this country, whether it be socialist or capitalist, there will be a sizeable section of the population with a great deal more money, or the advantages money can buy, than the remainder.

There are only two ways of preventing this section from forming itself into a social class. The State either allows the wealth-producing élite to accumulate and spend fortunes during their lifetime, but confiscates this capital on the death of every individual member of the élite through a death duty. Or it allows the individual élite member to live a luxurious life himself, while actually on the job, so to speak, but makes sure that his family are rigorously excluded from these benefits. Death duties sufficiently steep to be effective in preventing the carry-over of privilege from one generation to the next are clearly self-defeating: it is simply no incentive to allow a man to lavish money on his family during his lifetime if he knows that, on his death, his children will be deprived of the means to maintain anything like the same standards. Modern egalitarians therefore prefer the system that excludes the family right from the beginning. But this system has its own folly, as an examination of the expense-account system reveals.

WHATEVER may be the economic justification of the expense-account system, its social consequence is to enable individuals presumed to be fulfilling socially useful functions to escape from the dreariness of their home lives. Take a typical day in the life of a business executive or professional man, supposing that he has inherited no capital. Living in a small house without servants, he probably cooks his own breakfast, while his wife dresses the children for school. But from the moment he steps on the accelerator of the office-financed motor-car, he speeds into a different world. In his office he is served by a bevy of secretaries who have no objection to "sirring" him, whereas the "char" at home would never think of calling his wife "madam"; he entertains a client to luncheon at an expensive restaurant, choosing dishes and wines that he would never consider if the bill were his personal responsibility, while back home his wife is sitting down to a fried egg in the kitchen. If he is a member of the professional élite, he will probably lunch at his club, savouring a glass of Tio Pepe before the meal—at home it would always be South African — while breathing in the plush comfort—old silver, good claret, dexterous and deferential buttling, oil paintings on the walls—of Edwardian upper middle-class life which he is utterly incapable of reproducing in his own home. A whole generation must be growing up who know of the amenities of life only through expense-account experience, or through public occasions to which they are invited in their

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official capacities. Just as the universities, monasteries, and cathedral closes maintained a tradition of civilised living during the Dark Ages, so today it is left almost entirely to corporate institutions to preserve manners and style in daily living. By day, the élite member is a man of substance, with the prestige, tastes, manners, habits of a privileged being, dispensing tips to grateful attendants, hailing taxis with seigneurial command, cut off from the common run by his expense-account immunity. In the evening, with the office-financed magic carpet garaged for the night, he is just another suburban father, for whom the cellar means, not wine for the dining-room table, but coke for the boiler. His day will end, as it probably began, at the sink.

It is now relatively easy for a young man with ability, through scholarships, etc., to raise himself from a low social origin to positions high in the hierarchy. But at least in the professional élites, however high he climbs his monetary reward (after taxation) will not enable him to lead a life conspicuously different from the conditions of his origin. He, himself, in his rôle as a successful barrister or journalist, will enjoy a vastly superior existence, but his wife and children—unless they are fitted into the expense-account system by fiddling—will be only marginally better off than they would have been if the husband had never made good. A society that encourages a man to beautify his office, his car, even his flat and mistress—if they are for purposes of business prestige—everything in fact except his home, wife, and children, clearly regards the family more as a biological necessity than the basis of the social order.

In business, of course, it is still possible to earn salaries high enough even after taxation to enable their recipients to buy houses, educate their children, and generally enjoy a distinctive and superior family life. But this is a loophole egalitarians are determined to close. At the moment, private industry offers high salaries so as to tempt able men into its service. The nationalised industries, unless they are to make do with the second-rate, have to follow suit. But one of the recurring Socialist arguments for further nationalisation is that only when the State can determine the salary scale for the majority of industry will present inequalities of income be ironed out. The intention is certainly to make sure that, although élite members themselves must inevitably be allowed substantial tax concessions, these must be so arranged as not to benefit the families concerned.

IT SEEMS to me that the price egalitarians would have to pay to prevent élites spreading their privileges to their families, and thereby forming themselves into a social class, would be absurdly high. The vast majority of mankind are willing to forego satisfaction of present desires in the name of future benefits for one reason only—their children. There are always a few exceptional people who will act selflessly in the long-term interest of their country or community, but they are a minority. In times of national emergency perhaps a majority will act in this way. But only family pride canalises individual selfishness into social channels consistently and comprehensively through the length and breadth of society. The fundamental error of socialism is the belief that human beings will be willing, as citizens, to sacrifice the same amount of time, money, effort, loving care, on communal projects as they will sacrifice, as parents, on their own families. In a democracy, where the expenditure of public money must be dependent on popular agreement, public bodies—whether in the field of housing, education, or anything else—will never be free to choose the "best." This is not only, or even principally, because they will want to please as many electors as possible, or because of pressure to economise, but because men, in their capacity as councillors or M.P.s or borough engineers, do not *want* the best. It is only as parents that they have a sufficiently profound and personal interest in the future to justify the sacrifice of present satisfactions for future blessings, which is what the best requires. Local councils, State agencies, civic groups will always plump for what is adequate rather than for what is excellent. In town planning, for example, they will

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inevitably consider how best to meet present housing needs rather than how to build squares and crescents of lasting beauty. I believe that only in a society where a proportion of its citizens can earn enough and save enough to spend money themselves on their own families, where the driving force of family pride is allowed a considerable measure of freedom, will spending *voluntarily* rise above the drab level of meeting day-to-day needs.

Yet the egalitarian ideal is profoundly opposed to the institution of the family. It depends for its realisation on extracting élites from their family circles, so that they should neither be affected by the success or failure of their parents nor, in their turn, affect their children by their own success or failure. The egalitarian society would be graded not on the basis of the family, but on the individual extracted from his family. This ideal of a graded hierarchy of individuals during working hours being reduced, on returning home in the evening, to a common social status, sounds attractive. It seems to hold out the prospect of a society that is both hierarchical —which is necessary for its efficient ordering —but also fraternal, in that those at the bottom will not feel cut off from those at the top. But except in small homogeneous societies, such a prospect is illusory. In a highly complex, industrialised nation, class distinctions do not divide society; they reflect the fact that society is bound to be divided and make the best of those impulses towards combination and community that do exist.

People combine into social groups on a basis of shared distinctions. If we do away with these distinctions, if we reduce all social backgrounds to one approximate level, with everyone living in roughly the same sized house, wearing the same quality clothes, this will not bring people closer together but farther apart. If we do away with what makes people different, we do away with the very thing that makes them wish to combine most —the pleasure in finding others as different as they are themselves. Social groups must always be exclusive. They are held together by a shared sense of being different, even if it is the shared sense of being oppressed. The egalitarian should realise, therefore, that the more you make people the same, the less they will have in common—or rather, the less they will have in common that they are proud of or aware of. An egalitarian society will therefore tend to be one in which the social bonds have been so stretched, in an effort to enclose everyone within the same social circle, that no one will feel bound to anyone else. A class society, it is true, imposes arbitrary *segregation*; but a classless society does something far worse: it precludes natural *integration*.

In an egalitarian society those outstanding individuals who reach the top of the hierarchy will have nothing in common except their shared functional skills. Their interrelationship will be of the same impersonal kind that connects the various members of a committee who have come together for some specific purpose and will separate when their objective has been achieved. Depending on how far social egalitarianism is carried, élite members will either all come from different backgrounds—and have nothing in common except their professional pre-eminence—or what they have in common, since it is shared by everyone else in the same society, will constitute no more of a bond than common citizenship does at present. Such an atomised élite will be quite unsuited to fulfil the rôle of social leadership which society requires. The function of an upper class is not only to provide material from which perhaps a majority of the élites are drawn—it naturally never includes all the available ability—but rather to provide the framework within which the various élites can communicate and mingle, thereby exercising a continuous corporate influence over society in general. The specialist regards the public good as beyond his technical competence. The great shortcoming of government by a constantly changing élite, or even by a self-perpetuating élite, is that although only men of ability will occupy positions of influence, there is no body of men who, generation after generation, accept the obligation of determining the use to which the élite skills are put.

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All the problems of social leadership in a classless society are very much on view in contemporary America. One of the disturbing aspects of the United States today is that although élites exist in profusion, they appear to be prevented from fulfilling any general social function by the absence of any corporate cohesion. The politician, soldier, scientist, manager, technocrat, all wield great power within their own fields, but are socially neutral. That is to say, they accept no social responsibility beyond their particular function. Those at the top of the hierarchy—although in this case it is businessmen, the same problem would exist if it were civil servants—not only evade the social responsibilities which should properly accompany power, but their very failure in this respect is the necessary condition of their continuation in power. For the American élites to practise benevolent paternalism would involve them making an assumption destructive of the whole American dream: that the structure of society had been broadly settled and that those on top, because they were there to stay, owed a debt to those underneath, because they too, or at least, a majority of them, were also there to stay. To take a paternal interest in the lower strata of society is to suggest that they cannot look after themselves. It is precisely to maintain its position at the top of the social pyramid that an aristocracy concerns itself with the proper maintenance of the base; it is precisely to maintain *its* position at the top of the American social pyramid that the American élites do *not* concern themselves with the proper maintenance of its base. Social irresponsibility, in fact, is the compulsory genuflexion American élites make at the altar of equality. The resulting vacuum at the top is filled by the commercialised mass media which create fictional men of distinction who are not in reality allowed to exist.

Awareness of this gap in the American social structure explains the efforts of such political writers as Clinton Rossiter, Russell Kirk, and Peter Viereck to transform America's plutocracy into an aristocracy—an aristocracy, these new American conservatives always hasten to add, of an American cut and therefore called by some other name. Although, for reasons that cannot be enumerated here, their endeavours are unlikely to succeed, it does seem significant that just at the time when the Old World is determined to slough off its class colouration, many liberal-minded American intellectuals are searching for a class mould suitable for the New World.

A classless society stratified by achievement, either measured in money as in the United States, or in bureaucratic or professional seniority as for example in France, faces an inexorable dilemma. Either those who compose the élites eschew broad social responsibilities beyond their special fields because their senior position in the hierarchy is essentially temporary, insecure, and conditional on continued popular approval; or the élite members, because they are consciously chosen for their particular qualities of leadership, feel justified in ruthlessly imposing their acknowledgedly superior standards and tastes on their fellow citizens.

It is in the nature of élites either to imitate or dominate. In a despotism, of course, élites would be able to impose their will, and their standards and tastes, as they will either control or be backed by all the instruments of propaganda and political power. But we are not concerned here with social leadership under a despotism but with social leadership in a free society. In a parliamentary democracy, where élites cannot rely on force to support their privileges, they will seek to safeguard their positions by acting in harmony with popular desires and imitating popular attitudes. Because democracy tends to insist that the men who manage their affairs in all fields, from government to culture, shall be exceptional only for such qualities as practical activity and quick apprehension of popular wishes, democratic élites are likely to lack that strength of mind and originality which might tempt them to act out of harmony with the people's temper or, which is the same thing, to act beyond the people's comprehension, even though such acts might be for its future benefit.

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In contrast, an upper class, restrained by a democratic political system, can avoid the pitfalls of both imitation and domination. Since its members enjoy a superiority of status independent of popular approval or political power, they can act, think, speak, and above all live according to standards of their own choosing, which in time are followed by the rest of society not through blind obedience but through a desire to share a way of life that is self-evidently superior in interest and satisfaction. Influence exerted by example and accepted through attraction is the only kind of social leadership tolerable in a free society. Élites, either because they do not need to (being able to rely on political pressure), or because they do not dare to (being dependent on popular approval), are most unlikely to possess this precious quality.

At any time, therefore, a classless society is not a good but an evil. The dangers are particularly acute at just such a period as this country is now passing through, when the temptations for those at the top of society to impose their will, and the means at their disposal to do so, have seldom been as great. The prosperity and consumer equality made possible in modern industrial societies provide those at the top with far more effective popular diversions than the classical tyrant's bread and circuses. So profound is the present popular absorption with consumer pleasures, so persuasive the powers of modern publicity, and so blurred the obvious distinctions that once divided ruler from ruled that those who actually obey can all too easily be made to believe that they are really giving the orders.

In such a situation, it is highly unrealistic to talk of abolishing privilege, which has never been so inaccessible to effective popular control. The prime aim of a liberal society today should be to temper privilege with responsibility. Egalitarianism, however, would do precisely the opposite. It would either so frustrate the status and material aspirations of those new men now rising to the top as to create a dissatisfied and resentful élite with the power eventually to take what society refuses to give; or, in an effort to avoid this danger, would offer incentives of the most anti-social kind which would encourage an orgy of valueless spending on the expense account and preclude social responsibility by denying any security of tenure. A recognisable and secure upper class, accepting public responsibility in return for undisguised privilege, represents a far lesser danger than would the élites in an "egalitarian" society, whose privileges would be hidden and therefore uncontrolled and/or socially barren.

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Elizabeth Jane Howard

Portrait of My Grandfathers

LIKE many people, I can recollect two grandfathers, and like most children faced with characters who seem as important as they are incomprehensible, I instinctively labelled them in my earliest childhood. One of them was dangerous, and the other old. The labels were secret, wrong, and remarkably enduring.

My paternal grandfather acquired his private and terrifying reputation with me almost from the moment that we first set eyes upon each other. His name was Alexander Howard and he was a man of great energy and charm, who enjoyed everything enormously; his work, at which he was most successful, his family, which was large, and to whom he was devoted, almost everyone he met and everything that he did. An otherwise extremely intelligent man, renowned for his instant *rapport* with people, he felt with children that the impersonation of some wild animal at maximum volume was the most genial approach, and to this end, he would emerge slowly from his study, roaring and growling, and accompanying either noise with gestures of such ferocious goodwill that I screamed with horror, and when old enough, fled from him. I was his eldest grandchild, and he subsequently had many opportunities of tempering his approach to descendants, but it took me years to recover from it. This was partly due, I think, to the rooms from which he always seemed to emerge, which were far from reassuring. . . .

In all his houses that I remember, he always had a study where he must have spent a certain amount of time, but where I imagined he lived, or even, possibly, was kept. These rooms, in London or the country, had an identical composite smell and appearance which seemed to me perfectly suited to his savage and dangerous disposition. They were usually panelled (he grew, bought, sold, wrote about, and adored wood), and furnished with a heavy profusion of gigantic chairs, desks, sideboards, cupboards, glass-fronted bookcases, and overwhelming rigid clocks which I naturally assumed were named after him. The floor was covered by a carpet of violent irreconcilable red and blue. The walls were regimented by sporting prints of hares, foxes, and stags, pursued by packs of healthy men and fierce hounds into a kind of moonlit extremis, and there were several glass cases of stuffed salmon and pike whose faces were congealed into expressions of such murderous malevolence that I once examined them carefully to be sure that they could not escape. There were dozens of smaller clocks that fidgeted insistently behind the taller ones. There were pots of scarlet geranium in full unwinking flower, and boxes and jars of cigars, these two scents so confusing in my mind that for years afterwards I expected the one to smell of the other. There were weighty decanters filled with whisky and port, and a quantity of wood samples strewn all over his desk of every colour from the palest skin to the darkest fur of animals—striped and whorled and

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figured—parched and breathless, the grain gaping for nourishment like the dry palm of a hand, or seasoned and slippery like a blood horse's neck. There were small chests of shallow drawers with ivory knobs: one pulled, and they sprang open with a fiendish alacrity—oh elaborate horror!—hundreds of dead, rare beetles, pinned and stuck neatly to white paper and the amber of my grandfather's knowledge—beetles of no familiar colours or proportions, but exotic and evil in their design. There were one or two carved oriental figures—I think they were Hindoo—who seemed always to be waiting, even welcoming the worst. How, I wondered, did my grandmother and aunt endure the constant danger in which they lived with such apparent calm, even cheerfulness?

My grandfather was then, and for many years, invariably accompanied by a sleek, tailor-made mongrel of hideous aspect. He was mostly black, but had some ill-chosen splashes of white, was both shrewd and cowardly, with a sickly smile and a strong personality. He was a careerist, a toady, and a snob, wholly lacking in self-respect—in fact, a kind of fifth column in the household. His name was Simon, and it is significant that he also answered with hysterical sentiment to the name of Si.

I can remember only two other alarming facts which confirmed my various fears of my grandfather (did he *pretend* to be a wild beast, or was he one? Was his behaviour to me assumed as everybody assured me it was, or was it horribly natural?): the first was that he wore an eyeglass slung on to a black corded silk chain, the glass tucked into one of his beautiful waistcoat pockets: for some mysterious reason I confused the glass with an eye, and felt that when he pulled the sinuous and sinister black cord, an eye would emerge from his pocket. The second was his gargantuan vocal range when snoring. The noise, like all remarkable noises, was inextricably mixed up with the tempo at which it was presented and is difficult to describe, but he snored something like a steamroller heaving itself over a humped bridge; a steady increasing effort to the top of the hump, and then a surge of uncontrollable freedom down the other side: the effect, even from the end of a long passage on a summer afternoon, was horrific.

THEN, one hot Sunday morning, when the parks were blazing with self-conscious flowers, the roads danced, the motor-cars glittered, and the Serpentine lay like a huge carelessly-cut sapphire, I was taken to Rotten Row to see this grandfather ride. The riders pranced, jolted, streamed up and down their strip of tanbark, separated from an enormous, ambling, summer-dressed crowd by an iron post and rails which seemed to me ample and apt division between these two worlds. . . . He appeared, riding his favourite mare, a bright chestnut called Marigold. When he saw us, he stopped, and then, suddenly, I was hoisted above the railing up in front of him on to the horse. The sense of fear and privilege was so violent that, frightened though I was, I turned speechlessly to him. His face was very close above me. He wore a pale grey bowler hat, below which his eyes gleamed a ferocious blue, but with the most keen and reassuring kindness. He had a clipped moustache that was almost white, and a beautiful dark satin stock with a pearl pin in it, which rose out of his lemon waistcoat like a dolphin with a misplaced eye. He had put me in front of his horse: he was not frightening any more. I looked down once at the crowd, and then concentrated on clutching Marigold's mane and gripping her slippery shoulders. He was never frightening again.

By the time that he had half a dozen grandchildren he had bought a country house in Sussex which he decreed that we were all to use for holidays. We, were my father, his two brothers, their wives, and a gradual, but steady accumulation of children. The house stood on top of a hill, which meant that there was a constant wind and almost no water. It had various wells which usually ran dry, and even when they did not, brought forth reluctant brown water which tasted odd, and caused concern to my mother and aunts. "Nonsense; it was good for us—they weren't

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to worry their pretty little heads about that." When, however, a certain amount of fur came out of the drinking water tap, my grandfather got interested, and went into action. There was a sad little man called Sampson, acquiescent to my grandfather's lightest wish: the well was pumped as dry as possible, and Sampson was lowered down it in a basket. A fascinating day ensued. Sampson was hauled up at irregular intervals, shaking with cold and pallid from lack of oxygen, holding various pieces of an animal's skeleton which my grandfather with exclamations of scientific enthusiasm laid out on the lawn before he sent Sampson down for more. Sampson stuck it nobly, but he came up with fewer and fewer pieces of bone, and eventually indicated—he was virtually speechless—that he didn't think that there were any more bones. But my grandfather had an inch of vertebræ missing; "Nonsense, Sampson: down you go": and pinched, dumb with discomfort and devotion, down he went. When the animal had been thoroughly assembled, Sampson was allowed to lurch out of the basket, and we were allowed to use the well again.

The lack of water was a positive advantage, both to us as children, and to my grandfather, who adored water divining, sinking artesian wells, and reorganising the pumping of water from a desolate pond in which our farmer's fiancé was supposed to have drowned herself. He spent happy years dominating Sampson, and depreciating the domestic disadvantages to his daughters-in-law. He took all his grandchildren in his stride—lining us up at Christmas in order of age for half-crowns, and providing us with what was called the very, very old car, an immense, square vehicle and one of the earliest of its species, which he put in a field where it rotted in a noble decline. Thistles grew round it up to its roof; mice nestled in its upholstery, and bits of angular body fell gradually away. We drove it as long as its steering wheel remained: it smelled of warm prayer books, and was a great joy. Eventually it, too, became the merest skeleton in the grass, and finally sank majestically into the ground.

He also provided us with a very small brown pony called Joey, whose disposition was so vicious that in the end, having bit, kicked, and thrown the lot of us, he was sold to conquer fresh hordes of unsuspecting children. His energies were an admirable mixture of love, autocracy, and great common sense. Thus, when the last war was declared, he got up from listening to the broadcast and kissed all his sons: then he ordered all of us (about twenty-five in number, and including people with extremely small wooden spades) to dig ourselves an air-raid shelter.

My grandfather spent his last years fighting slow, but inexorable blindness. The pleasures and interests of his life were gradually cut off: no riding, no driving, no shooting, yachting, reading, travelling, no tree-planting (he planted many thousands of trees all over England)—less and less active freedom of any kind. He did not easily adapt himself to his disability, but resisted it with a kind of silent gallantry—I never heard him mention it. When he could no longer write them, he dictated his books, and he made the journey from Sussex to his office in London alone, and long after he could not see at all. The last time that I saw him was accidentally on Charing Cross Station. He was striding deliberately down the platform towards the ticket barrier: a little shrunken, but upright, immaculate, and indomitable—his eyes staring ahead with such steady purpose that at first I thought he was lost in his thoughts and had not noticed me. It was only when I was close to him that I saw the secret strain—the curious blend of a picture that somebody presents when they think they are alone, and the anxiety, the ordeal which reaching the ticket barrier had become for him. I put out my hand, but of course he could not see it, and to help him, to let him know that I had seen him seemed suddenly only an insult to his courage. I remember the difficulty of standing still where he had passed me, and watching him finish his journey alone. There was not much more of it: he was eighty-three; a few months later he died, and his dying

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cut off a piece of life for everybody who knew him and finished an age.

II

MY OTHER grandfather, Arthur Somervell, was not in the least dangerous—he was simply very, very old. He had white hair, a white pointed beard, and a quiet, sometimes squeaky, usually furry, voice. He was invariably gentle and I adored him. I also felt rather proud of knowing anyone so incomparably ancient. It was with mixed feelings that going to tea with him one day I met someone else with white hair, a white moustache, and a gentle voice. This was Professor Mackail, they said, a friend of your grandfather's. After careful jealous observation, I came to the generous conclusion that it was clever of them to have found the only other man old enough to be my grandfather's friend. It was like having one gentle, affectionate polar bear, and then finding a pair for it. As Professor Mackail did not have a white beard, but only a moustache, I assumed that he must be a good thirty years younger, and left it at that.

When I was very young, we lived in the same street as this grandfather, and on Sundays I was allowed to go alone to lunch at his house. In my memory it was always spring or summer on these occasions. I ran loudly, stamping the pink and white confetti of petals that lay on the pavement until I reached the red pillar box that stood outside my grandparents' house. There, often, my grandfather would meet me, and bending down, present me with his coarse silky beard, and faint smell which was something like sweetbriar. Then, comfortably holding hands, we would march into the house, into the drawing-room where my grandmother was always sitting, cast upon a huge craggy armchair like a beautiful shipwreck. She spoiled me with a magnificent carelessness that I thoroughly appreciated, allowing me to drink wine and water at luncheon, and discussing the life of Christ, Communism, and the state of the world with me as though I was any luncheon guest: elevating me to a state of triumphant, honoured ignorance, instead of the knowledgeable boredom that the old ropes of grown-ups with children induce. For lunch we always had roast chicken and meringues—food which my grandmother very properly considered my favourite meal. Afterwards, I was made to lie on the floor with my head on one of the coloured cushions which my grandfather called after any of the students he examined in music whose names were exotic or silly enough. I was given a sweet, and a book was read aloud. Luxury, comfort, I was later to consider, began there: were synonymous with calm. After a while, I was allowed to sit up and "play" with some of the curious and interesting objects that were scattered about the house. This usually meant staring at things—not allowed to touch—while my grandmother told me about them. I had no resentment about this; she contrived to give the objects such a holy value that I was content simply to gaze—at a complete set of miniature Japanese furniture lacquered in red and black; at the strand of Mozart's hair, fine and golden like an angel, which was tied with a piece of pale blue silk framed in a small pinchbeck locket; at a thin, stiff wooden doll that had belonged to my grandfather and was called Mr. Hampshire, whose painted face, sad and discreet, stared back at me with an expression a thousand years old. . . .

When, by mutual consent, it was time for my visit to finish, I did not race back down the street, but walked slowly, crammed with meringue, and important, tragic thoughts. "Well," they said, kindly receiving me at home; "was it fun, and what did you have for luncheon?" They were, in comparison to my grandmother, talking down to me: roast chicken and meringues were too frivolous a reply—merely pandering to them—and I searched for the most stern and sophisticated substitute. "Cold beef," I said, and many Sundays after they ceased to believe me I stuck stubbornly to this formula.

MY GRANDFATHER was a composer. I don't think I realised this until I was about five, when I wrote a poem which seemed to me the most beautiful words I'd

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ever heard in my life. In those days I was constantly having sore throats, and one day, lying fevered, with my throat like a burning cart-track, they brought me an exquisitely-written sheet of music: "Your grandfather has made a song of your poem." At five I could not read music; my grandfather sang in a squeaky, out-of-tune voice, and so somebody else had to sing it. I was deeply impressed. "Lovely," I whispered hoarsely; "very nice words," they said; "about a lovebird coming out of a wood: why did you think of a lovebird?" I wanted a bluebird flying out of a dark wood, and that was why. But lovebirds are *green*, they said. I argued weakly, but the song was ruined for me: the bird being green spoiled it, and the idea that one could change words that had been written down with music was preposterous. My plans for future collaboration with my grandfather crashed: I had decided to write all his words for him for the rest of our lives—it not occurring to me that music was possible without words—and now this was all at an end, because whatever they thought of it, the song was imperfect. I could now see that green bird flying obstinately out of the dark wood—green on green, and the feeling of colour lost. We never wrote another song.

As I grew older, the complexion of Sundays changed. When he was giving afternoon recitals, Nicholas Orloff would lunch with my grandparents. He played Chopin in the drawing-room before lunch—the room was shot with a kind of tension beyond the music—a sense of ordeal—and it seemed to me that my grandmother treated him as though he was due to die in the Wigmore Hall at three o'clock. I thought he was wonderful, and used to stand admiringly by him while he played, but he liked my brother best, and played The Flight of the Bumble Bee for him again and again. He brought me chocolates, but I felt that this was because I was only a girl, and longed for a special piece of music. My grandmother said that during the Revolution he had had to play the piano for eight hours a day in a factory on a diet of potatoes. I didn't know what the Revolution was, but I hated potatoes, and the idea of a piano in a factory became a nightmare: I imagined him playing all the furious difficult things he played surrounded by clanking machinery with somebody popping horrible pieces of potato into his mouth, and developed a kind of holy pity for him which never left me. After lunch we went to the Wigmore Hall to hear him, and I watched the other people sternly—hoping that they would sit quietly while he was playing as I was told to do, and clap at the end, but not too loudly, in case it frightened him.

One day my grandfather took me to tea with Henry Ford in his studio. I knew all the Andrew Lang fairy books which he illustrated, and admired him deeply. The studio seemed dark and dirty—it was autumn, and the smell was so overwhelming that one felt the chairs and table and curtains were covered with wet paint—even the bread and butter had possibly been varnished. There were small cherry cakes for tea: the cherries kept falling off and bouncing on to the floor, and Henry Ford pounced on them like a dirty bird and popped them into his mouth. My grandfather asked what he was painting. He was painting thirteen princesses being turned into swans, he said in a practical voice—here—and he pulled his easel round for us to see. He was painting exactly that. I counted the princesses, and my heart swelled with pride to be having cherry cakes with somebody who had such magical power, but I was most carefully polite to him, in case his power extended beyond painting.

As I grew older, life with my grandfather changed: he was still very old, but he was otherwise less misty as a person; life with him became more definite and interesting, and at the same time a streak of conspiracy crept in. The conspiracy was between us against my grandmother. The underlying difficulty was that she had a great sense of occasion with little opportunity to exercise it, and he, in a mild and innocent manner, had a great sense of opportunity for which there was almost no occasion. A grand-daughter increased his range: to the Zoo, where we both ate ice-cream cones in "a vulgar manner, in

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public." To Kew, where, after proper consideration of the flora, we rushed to the Fair by the bridge and had double rides on the Merry-Go-Round. I shall always remember him on a piebald pony that had a painted rollicking sneer on its face, upright, being born on the crest of each rich, tinny wave of music that pulsed from the centre of the machine—his face set with pleasure. On the way back in the bus he would tell me jokes that seemed to me the last word in wit and sophistication, his voice squeaky with impending dénouement, tears pouring down his face when he laughed, which was even more than I did. When we got back from these excursions to tea with my grandmother in her chair, we had always had a lovely time, but we selected the more sedate pleasures, and our vulgar giggles and undignified behaviour remained a tacit secret. Only once did I let him down. "Come up to my study, little dear," he said, and then on the stairs, "I have something for you." His study was dark, bleak, and stuffy. It looked on to a black brick wall, and the mildewed roughcast of another house. The only glowing object was a patchwork quilt made by my mother, but she had used a lot of yellow satin, and this had all rotted, leaving gaping patches like empty honeycomb. There was a desk, a piano, and a huge picture of Brahms, who, from the way in which they all spoke of him, I confused for many years with God, but whose stature was abjectly diminished when my grandparents moved house, when he was described on the inventory as "Bearded Gent in Beaded Frame." Here my grandfather wrote his music—spending long hours of mysterious silence, while downstairs my grandmother, with a rubber-tipped stick and painful pointed shoes, creaked about in an exaggerated and mournful pianissimo. (She treated his composition as a mild but chronic illness; his attacks of music could be gauged like disease—their severity depending on their duration. When he was writing his violin concerto, I remember thinking that he was really ill, and that it was about like whooping cough because it seemed to go on for so many weeks.) On this occasion, with a gleam that meant some private treat, he said: "Do you like liquorice?" Oh yes, and I could see that it was something one would not eat in the drawing-room. I was thinking of delicious striped sweets, but he pulled a great stick, like a piece of park railing, out of his drawer and chipped two pieces off the end of it with his penknife. "Pop it in." It was violently bitter and tasted of all the medicine I had ever had in my life. "It's *real* liquorice," he said with pride, and carefully put away the big stick. I thanked him solemnly, endured it for about five minutes, and finally hid it in my handkerchief. Afterwards, when he offered me more, I managed to refuse without his knowing how poisonous it had seemed: he was so extremely gentle, deprecating in his approach—even to children—that from the earliest age I wanted to protect him. Thus when he gave me a stuffed lion called Marco, a present which I felt was far too young for me, I was meekly enthusiastic, until I found that he owned one himself—called Jeremy, and was unashamedly devoted to it. This sort of freak behaviour is utterly confounding when one is a child, and gives rise to a good deal of resentment. It is as though one spent months trying to master all the details of foreign exchange, only to find without any warning that everybody has decided to use tiddley-winks instead of money. It throws out all one's hard-earned knowledge, and, as a child, what with washing, meal times, sleeping, and one restriction and another, one is permanently short of time. However, out of sheer devotion to my grandfather, I accepted the presence of both lions.

I remember another shock of disillusion when he was knighted. "He has been made a knight," they said. Steeped in Henry Ford's illustrations I immediately saw him—no longer in a dark grey suit on a painted, snarling pony, but dressed in golden armour on a white steed whose expression was as gentle as his own—wandering, wondering through magnificent forests carpeted with thick embroidery flowers in search of a princess or a swan, a dragon or a giant.... "Will he have silver armour, or gold?" they

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asked me, and I knew that they were laughing at me—too near the bones of my imagination; that he would not have armour at all, and that there was simply no point in his becoming a knight.

IN THE summers of the early thirties, these grandparents used to come and stay in the country with us. There was a large satinwood piano like a decayed gentlewoman with a gracious appearance and a broken heart which he played most patiently for us in the evenings—not in a respectful silence, for we all sang—dozens of us—loudly, happily, and badly. His playing, absolutely distinctive, made a lasting impression upon me. It was not by concert-hall standards, that he played very well, but he had an intimacy, a kind of private ease with the instrument which was both natural and confiding—as though their communication with each other incidentally made music. He had been the youngest child in a family of nine: his parents had not been able to afford music lessons for their younger children, and so he had sat under a table which was covered to the floor by a baize cloth and listened to an older brother's lesson —afterwards practising by himself. (It was he who was subsequently responsible for any standard of musicianship in teachers throughout the country, as before him, anybody could teach any kind of music with little or no knowledge or taste about its quality.) He taught me about key signatures, so that from having been a torturing mystery, they were suddenly as easy to understand as words on a page. He used to examine the school where I spent a short and miserable time for sight-reading, and part of the misery was due to his twice placing me second. "Favouritism," howled my contemporary enemies. I denied this, and as he had a great sense of justice I was probably right; but I remember a furtive feeling that I cared more for his love than for his objective opinion of my musical ability, which in any case was very poor.

I grew older, but my grandfather did not; only, sometimes, it seemed to me that he was getting smaller and even more gentle. I have fleeting recollections of him standing on concert platforms after performances of his work —beside Adila Fachiri after she had played his violin concerto—with various conductors and singers who towered and slouched by his small figure with its Victorian dignity. His voice was still furry and sometimes squeaky, but there seemed less of it. One Easter holidays when I was about thirteen, I was going to stay in Westmorland which was his country, and went to say good-bye to him first. He was in bed. "He is just rather tired," they said. He was sitting upright in bed wearing pyjamas widely striped in blue and white, like breakfast cups. On the bed was a tray covered with his ties, which he was sorting and neatly rolling into separate coils. I felt oddly constrained with him for the first time in my life, and for want of anything better to say, asked him what he was doing with them. "I like to leave everything tidy." "Why? Are you going away?" He looked at me for a moment, as though he had lost me, and he was not my ancient beloved grandfather, but simply somebody who was tired and sad, and I did not know which had come first. I kissed him, and the sweetbriar smell was there for the last time.

We came back from our holidays because he was dying. He died as gently as he lived: slipped unassumingly out, as softly as a candle, and left us in the dark.

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Ernest Gellner

The Sheep and the Saint

LAST summer I sacrificed a sheep to a tribal saint and communal ancestor. His full name is Sidi Said ou Brahim el Berraui, commonly known as Dadda Said. The word "dadda" does really have a meaning resembling that of the English "daddy." It means ultimate grandfather, and Dadda Said is indeed the common ancestor of a tribe hidden amongst the gorges of the High Atlas.

My piety in sacrificing a sheep to Dadda Said was not wholly free of ulterior motives. Yet it would be quite untrue to say that I am sceptical concerning Dadda Said. I doubt neither his existence nor his sanctity. Dadda Said is most probably a genuine historical figure, though he may have lived as early as 1300 or as late as 1500; what evidence there is concerning the time of his life is inconclusive. It is hard to tell. Berbers of the Atlas are illiterate folk; their language possesses no alphabet. What few Arabic documents exist are rare, jealously guarded, ambiguous, and unreliable. . . .

I said I did not doubt his existence. I do not doubt his sanctity either, provided it is clearly understood that Berber sanctity is meant. The Berber word "*agurram*" is only translated as "saint" for lack of a better term. "*Igurramen*"—that is the plural of "*agurram*"—are powerful, generally wealthy and generous, well informed about matters of this and the other world, and all this with the aid of supernatural agencies. There are good *igurramen* and bad *igurramen*. The good ones happily predominate, but you simply must face the fact that there are wicked ones, whose supernatural contacts tend to be exclusively with the devil.

Now it follows from all this that Berber sanctity can be fairly easily spotted by external signs, and above all by material consequences. One is expected to judge and recognise them by their fruits; and Dadda Said, whose existence and sanctity I do not doubt, is so well remembered—not only by the tribe who are his descendants but also by all surrounding tribes—and he has left so deep a mark on the place-names, customs, and institutions for miles around, that surely he must have been an *agurram*.

No one could live in the region and not be aware of Dadda Said. I have met young Berbers who had forgotten the name of Mohammed; I do not believe one could find a young boy or girl in the region who was unaware of Dadda Said. As for myself—and this may in part account for my belief in him—I only had to look out of my window to see Dadda Said's tomb, a fine square, whitewashed little house with a shining dome and a knob on, overshadowing miserable, silent, anonymous Berber graves and a few ramshackle vaults of recent notables. Almost all my neighbours were men who could trace their ancestry back one by one right to Dadda Said; and indeed past him right on to Sidna Ali, Mohammed's son-in-law, though here my belief was no longer with them.

NEVERTHELESS, for all my belief, my motive for sacrificing a sheep to Dadda Said was desire for information rather than

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piety. The local custom is to bring sacrifices, ranging from bulls to chicken, but most often sheep, to Dadda Said. To bring him a sacrifice means to slaughter the unfortunate animal in front of his tomb. The saint, being no longer of this world, cannot directly profit from the material consequences of the sacrifice. But someone must consume the meat, and indeed someone does. The question is—who? I had failed to get an accurate answer to this question by interrogation, mainly, I think, because it is not in the interests of those who know it to disclose what they know.

It had occurred to me that one way of getting around this would be to offer a donation oneself.

The best way of finding out what happens in given conditions is to bring those conditions about and observe the results; in other words, to experiment. Now experiments are often impossible in the social sciences, for practical and/or moral reasons. But there seemed no practical difficulties over and above the cost of a sheep—they were cheap at that time of year, and in any case the cost would in the end be borne by the research-financing body that had sent me to Morocco. As for moral objections—why, no one, except the poor sheep itself, would suffer, and some persons not yet identified would profit by consuming the mutton. To find out just who these persons were, was—from my viewpoint—the object of the exercise. I might as well confess now that I wasn't much wiser concerning this matter when it was all over, but I did learn a great number of other things in the process.

Now whilst there seemed no real moral objection to the experiment—perhaps I should say no moral objection from my viewpoint—there might, for all one knew, be one from the viewpoint of the Berbers. The first thing to do was to ascertain whether this was so.

I shall refer to the two dominant local families as the Montagues and the Capulets—not without cause—though their hostility does not exclude some social contact and the maintenance of superficial courtesies. The present tribal chief is a Montague; the previous chief was a Capulet, deposed three years ago when popular clamour against him coincided with the displeasure of the French administration. He resigned involuntarily and died not long after. The Montague who replaced him is still chief. More need hardly be said about the roots of the present hostility between the two families. The two families, one should add, are fairly close cousins; but, to paraphrase a remark of Bernard Shaw's, Berbers are often separated by bonds of common kinship.

It lay in the nature of our anthropological work that my wife and I tried to be on equally good terms with both the Montagues and the Capulets. The Montague who is present chief was friendly but cautious and nervous—as well he might be in the Morocco of 1955. He often had the bewildered air of a man who would dearly like to know which side his bread was buttered but had not quite succeeded in finding out. He did not quite know what to make of us, two Europeans who wanted to live with Berbers, as Berbers as far as we could, and ask a lot of questions; especially as we were not French and he did not know how much the French Administration approved.

THE Capulets were far more friendly and open. Being out of power they had less to lose, and being out of power they had far more time on their hands. It was to them that I first mentioned with assumed casualness the idea of donating a sheep to their general ancestor, Dadda Said. Their reaction was immediate, spontaneous, and enthusiastic. It was indeed an excellent idea, they thought. To confirm me in my intention they told us the story of a French sergeant-major in an outpost two-days' walking away, who had applied for a commission and had almost despaired of obtaining it, when in the end he decided to come over to Dadda Said's sanctuary and sacrifice a sheep. When he then returned to his outpost, the letter informing him of his promotion to Second-Lieutenant was awaiting him. (It promptly occurred to me that I might ask Dadda Said for promotion on the academic ladder, but I

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abandoned this, not wishing to test the good saint too hard.)

So the Capulets were enthusiastic; but, they added with emphasis, not a word to anyone, not a word to the Montagues, not a word to the chief. We, the Capulets, shall arrange the whole affair far better, and he, the conceited little upstart, would only spoil it.

It was obvious that nothing would please the Capulets as much as to have a sheep sacrificed in a manner that constituted a slap in the face of the chief, who was the head of the Montagues. This was very interesting in itself, but I could not afford to antagonise the chief if I wanted to find out more. The chief fancied himself to be the principal guardian of Dadda Said's tomb; for a sacrifice to take place there out of his control or even without his knowledge would indeed be an affront. I might in the end have to sacrifice two sheep, it appeared. . . .

Disregarding the Capulets' instructions to keep quiet about my intentions, I mentioned the possibility of a sacrifice to the chief. His reaction was perhaps less demonstratively enthusiastic, but he made up for that by immediate practical co-operativeness. In fact he was more than co-operative; he rushed me on. He reinterpreted my tentative exploration as a definite wish. He only wanted to know when and how much; the rest to be left to him. He would provide the sheep; I'd buy it off him, and then hand it over to him again. He would then arrange the actual slaughter, the distribution, and the mediation of request and blessing between me and the great deceased saint, Dadda Said, his own ancestor.

At this stage I must—somewhat belatedly—introduce the central character in this episode; the central living character, anyway, more interesting than anyone else involved, apart from the long-dead saint. I shall refer to him simply as the Clergyman*—the *fquih* as the Berbers say. A scribe or cleric, a man who can, and does, lead prayers, write and read letters in Arabic for the illiterate tribesmen, and teach their children a few snippets of the Koran. There are many such *foquaha*; our village, being a tribal capital, had no fewer than three. I have met many scribes. Often they are just simple, hardy peasants differing from others only in being literate, and not very literate at that. At the worst, they are a kind of Berber version of a free-floating intelligentsia at its most free-floating. They are seldom locals; scribes, like blacksmiths and acrobat-entertainers, are specialists whom our highland Berber tribes habitually import. Scribes co-exist with *igurramen*, that is with saints, in a way this episode will bring out.

Now the clergyman in our episode was quite unlike any other Berber scribe that I have ever met. He was not merely free-floating, he was also a genuine intellectual. He possessed a library of no fewer than five volumes, which is unheard of in the High Atlas; he was genuinely avid for more. He borrowed the few books in Arabic (with French translation) that I possessed.

We liked him and he seemed to like us. He was an excellent conversationalist and a willing supplier of information. At the time, he seemed to spend half his time with us. From our viewpoint he had but one snag; his intelligent interest in local affairs was inevitably also critical, and he interpreted everything in the light of what things *should* be like. We wanted facts, and ideals only *as* facts, as ideals held by locals. He gave us ideals that were ahead not merely of practice but equally ahead of local aspiration. He only gave us local facts contemptuously, as instances of the degradation and imperfection of man. Local facts, being to his mind just so many scandalous aberrations, did not interest him in their detail; for perfection might be absorbing, but error and sin surely do not merit an accurate record. At least, so it seemed to him. He was, so to speak, interested in man being born free; we were professionally interested in just what the local chains were, and how they functioned.

Now the central fact about Berber sanctity,

* Islam has no clergy. Nevertheless this is the term we used, and it conveys his social position better than other terms would.

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about being an *agurram*, is its heredity. To initiate a line of saints you must have some merit — though Berbers, like others, confuse moral merit with material success. But once a line of saints is established not even merit is required. Offspring of saints in the male line are *ex officio* saints themselves. Hence both our Montagues and our Capulets were "saints."

Vis-à-vis this cult of hereditary sanctity, our clergyman was a protestant. With the excited voice of one conveying a new, important, and dangerous truth he told us that sanctity depended not on ancestry but on merit; above all, on inner merit. He somewhat overestimated the extent to which these ideas were novel to us; but in the context of this holy tribe, whose leading members made their living in part from their descent and sanctity, what he said was novel enough; it was dangerous, and it was exciting.

At the beginning of the drama we thought the clergyman was in the Capulet's pocket, so to speak. He and his family lived in a house owned by them. He was often seen with them; and when it was a matter of running down the chief, the Montague, they spoke with one voice. But, in fact, as it turned out, he was neither the Capulet's agent nor their protégé. He acted and spoke from conviction and not on commission; and they in turn were quite prepared to let him down.

He often and passionately explained to us his contempt for merely hereditary sanctity and its profits, with special reference to our sheep. It would go to the chief, and how little he deserved it! These speeches were overheard; by children, by the Berber woman who made our bread, by people whom the clergyman thought sympathetic to his sentiments. He suggested alternative ways in which we could donate our sheep to the dead saint without it passing through his living descendant, the present chief. All this was soon known about the village. We were passive and patient, observing what we could and trying to avoid a definite commitment on an issue that was showing us so much of local life. We also rather enjoyed the stir and intrigues we had caused. Our moral sentiments were with the clergyman, but our research interests were above the battle and only concerned with its perpetuation. We had not yet decided between the two considerations, but we realised what the field-worker's motto should be: an alien society is not a spectacle but a predicament.

IT WOULD be tedious to go through all the details of the intrigue. Many visits were paid by many people, much tea was drunk, much was said and hinted. In the end the chief had his way. The Capulets had turned against the clergyman and in favour of the chief, the Montague. When they saw that the clergyman was not merely campaigning against the chief but using arguments that would undermine their, the Capulets', position as well, they switched over. They realised that a principle higher than just annoying the chief was involved.

The chief had his way. It was his sheep that we bought, and we handed it over again to him. It was consumed only by him and his household. This would not, incidentally, be the normal practice. On other occasions certain other descendants of Dadda Said would also profit. But on this occasion, his very position having been challenged, he had to demonstrate his power and safeguard his prestige. This question of prestige and principle explains why there had been so much fuss about a single miserable sheep. When utter strangers, and Europeans at that, made a sacrifice to Dadda Said, the event would be noticed and commented on; what happened and was allowed to happen would reflect on the chief's power. It would give some people food for thought and might even create a precedent.

The actual ceremonial was simple. Before the unfortunate sheep had its throat cut, the chief knocked on the door of Dadda Said's tomb to wake his spirit and introduce me to him. Then he told the spirit, without going into much unnecessary detail, that this stranger, monsieur Ernest, had a wish and in return for supernatural assistance was presenting—one sheep. I insisted on expressing

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my wish aloud; the chief did not want this, being prepared to give me a kind of *carte blanche*, and to ask Dadda Said to grant whatever was just then on my mind. I persisted and got my way on this point. I did not know whether Dadda Said would hear me, but I wanted to make sure that the chief did. I acted like a man who puts something in a letter intended more for the censor than for the recipient. For my wish was "Let me be aided in finding out all that goes on in the tribe." Having helped to sacrifice the sheep in the interests of this wish, the chief might, now that he knew the nature of the wish, feel bound to assist me himself. Such at least was my naïve hope.

Soon after the sacrifice my wife became ill and we had to go off to an outpost where medicines were available. It was a few days before we got back. When we returned the clergyman was no longer there. Enquiries disclosed that he was now in prison at another French outpost; and after release he would not be allowed to return but be sent under escort to his home village, on the other side of the Atlas at the edge of the Sahara. Rumours soon reached us that it was his rôle in the affair of our sheep that was responsible for his misfortune.

CONTRARY to all our self-imposed rules which otherwise we always followed, we went to the French administration about this. The clergyman being in an official prison, presumably on the chief's initiative but necessarily with the administration's permission, there was nothing else to do. We saw an amiable young lieutenant, closer to us in age and outlook than the commandant in charge of the whole region; he was also physically closer to where we lived. He saw our point and promised to make enquiries. This he did, and their outcome was sad.

It transpired that the unfortunate clergyman had previous convictions against him, one for black magic and the other for forging Arabic land-deeds; and for another thing, he had no permission to reside outside his own home tribe. This would not matter if he had kept on the right side of our chief. As long as there was no trouble, the administration which, especially in the summer of 1955, had other worries, would leave him alone. But now that he had displeased the local powers that be, his record, his lack of documents, and his being a stranger could be brought to bear against him in an irresistible way. There was nothing to be done. Nothing was done.

We shall never know the truth about his previous convictions. It may be that, like his present misfortune, it was due to his ethical originality and idealism rather than any misdeeds. But I prefer to think of him as actually having been guilty. I think no less well of him for that. A moral reformer is no less valuable or right for being morally mediocre himself. We do not blame a painter for being ugly or a novelist for leading a dull life. Moreover, it might be argued that a man fired by an ideal beyond the understanding of his environment, may be forced by an unregenerate society into evil courses through no fault of his own. If the clergyman did not remind one of Socrates, at least he was in his little way a kind of Berber tribal Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

I could do nothing for him. My only consolation for having been the unintentional instrument of his ruin, is that I shall never reclaim the two pounds and one Arabic book that I lent him and that are still in his possession. The two pounds will thus end a strange journey from being part of an oil-fortune, through an American Research Foundation and British University, through my pocket, to end in aiding a Berber moral reformer. I can also salute him as a moralist and minor martyr by telling this story. He will never hear this salute, but then, unlike our friendship, it will not do him any harm either.

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SEVEN CANADIAN POETS

(edited by Norman Levine)

Twenty Below

THE woman watches her husband rubbing his nose,
frozen while chopping a hole in the river's ice,
now thawing slowly between his hands and snow—
sitting by the stove with his peasant eyes nowhere
and his feet in their ribbed grey homespun stockings placed
in the oven, the fire roaring with the top grate raised,
the pipes and flues across the room near white
with heat. The mongrel restless at his side
creeps closer to the fire. The children doze,
half living only through the frozen days.

The woman goes to the window and presses her hand
against the glacial pane, and leans her head
against the frame. Her breath has made a hole
in the frost. She can see outside the northern cold
smothering the world; and an impossible sleep
and silence falling from a sky of slate,
even the pines grey and rigid and still,
the mighty hills mere shadows on the pale
immeasurable horizon.

Without reason,
feeling only her heart oppressive within her
and her life stopped dead and motionless in the hoar
and drifted week, she weeps, and the tears become
cold rivulets that cut across her cheeks.

The cold presses into the room
from every side through the logs and stones and chinks
between the logs, so the circle of people sinks
into sopor, and the woman takes her sadness
and thaws it before the flames.

R. A. D. Ford

R. A. D. FORD (1915–). Ottawa. With the Department of External Affairs. Has not yet published in book form.

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Antichrist as a Child

When Antichrist was a child
He caught himself tracing
The capital letter A
On a window sill
And wondered why
Because his name contained no A.
And as he crookedly stood
In his mother's flower-garden
He wondered why she looked so sadly
Out of an upstairs window at him.
He wondered why his father stared so
Whenever he saw his little son
Walking in his soot-coloured suit.
He wondered why the flowers
And even the ugliest weeds
Avoided all his fingers and his touch.
And when his shoes began to hurt
Because his feet were becoming hooves
He did not let on to anyone
For fear they would shoot him for a monster.
He wondered why he more and more
Dreamed of eclipses of the sun,
Of sunsets, ruined towns and zeppelins,
And especially inverted, upside down churches.

The Plum Tree

The plums are like blue pendulums
That thrum the gold-wired winds of summer.
In the opium-still noon they hang or fall,
The plump, ripe plums.
I suppose my little sister died
Dreaming of looking up at them,
Of lying beneath that crooked plum tree,
That green heaven with blue stars pied.
In this lonely haunted farmhouse
All things are voiceless save the sound
Of some plums falling through the summer air
Straight to the ground.

And there is no listener, no hearer
For the small thunders of their falling
(Falling as dead stars rush to a winter sea)
Save a child who, lolling
Among the trunks and old featherticks
That fill the room where he was born,
Hears them in his silent dreaming
On a dark engraving to a fairy-tale forlorn.
Only he hears their intermittent soft tattoo
Upon the dry, brown summer ground
At the edge of the old orchard.
Only he hears, and farther away,
Some happy animal's slow, listless moo.

James Reaney

JAMES REANEY (1926–). Stratford, Ontario. Teaches at the University of Manitoba. One book of poems published, The Red Heart.

I Have Seen the Robins Fall

I have seen the robins fall
One by one, from the trees, their throats dry;
And I have heard their music cease,
Stalked to silence in the high stark trees.

The fingers of grass I have seen bent
In the dry air, and split to sharp forks;
The sea dashing on a dandelion
Crusted, and turned to rusted iron.

I have seen a white salt spread on your stones,
With the crushed powder of pure, white bones,
And all the poems that sang in my heart
Turned to the same white, bitter salt.

Louis Dudek

LOUIS DUDEK (1918–). Montreal. Teaches at McGill University. His published books include: East of the City, The Searching Image, Twenty-Four Poems.

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Airman and Seagull Killed by Water

THE earth bird fell. The scythe-wings stopped.
Dropped old by the gallow air.
From the water a flutter, then a song
Spilled with the agony of silence entered.

For he of land cemented with water
Ripped with white knife is brother of those
Asleep on pillows soft with fish.
Eyes as in butterflies
Kissed the foliage of heaven,
Walked the cassock of loneliness,
But had no skill to grasp either.

Unroll no ghosts for those salted.
What loss fictitious was never born.
One shroud wrinkled open a mother's breast,
One blossom grew white on the waves,
What floats is dead.

I Walk by the Harbour

I WALK by the harbour.
By the harbour there are many people and houses.
The houses are stacked as cards and coloured as children.
The people stand as grey rails.
Some watch tired boats ride the sea's-spine.
Some listen to the band.
And all are weeping.

Gulls blow as a blizzard above the harbour and boats,
And the gulls cry like weeping.
Light paints the land.
Circles and triangles are hills and valleys.
But the weeping has neither.
Silently it spreads all around
Like the green nets the sea brings in
To cover the rocks.

The band continues to play as a small bird.
The people stand as the houses.
The sea groans when it covers the land.
The weeping is monotonous but eternal.

Norman Levine

NORMAN LEVINE (1924–). Ottawa. Has published one book of poetry. The Tightrope Walker, *and a novel,* The Angled Road.

Nuit

LA nuit
Le silence de la nuit
M'entoure
Comme de grands courants sous-marins.

Je repose au fond de l'eau muette et glauque.
J'entends mon cœur
Qui s'illumine et s'éteint
Comme un phare.

Rythme sourd
Code secret
Je ne déchiffre aucun mystère.

A chaque éclat de lumière
Je ferme les yeux
Pour la continuité de la nuit
La perpétuité du silence
Où je sombre.

Anne Hébert

ANNE HÉBERT (1916–). Quebec. Has published Les Songs en Equilibre; Le Tombeau des Rois; *and* Le Torrent.

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Adolescence

In love they wore themselves in a green embrace.
A silken rain fell through the spring upon them.
In the park she fed the swans and he
whittled nervously with his strange hands.
And white was mixed with all their colours
as if they drew it from flowering trees.

At night his two-finger whistle brought her down
the waterfall stairs to his shy smile
which, like an eddy, turned her round and round
lazily and slowly so her will
was nowhere—as in dreams things are and aren't.

Walking along the avenues in the dark
street lamps sang like sopranos in their heads
with a violence they never understood
and all their movements when they were together
had no conclusion.

Only leaning into the question had they motion:
after they parted were savage and swift as gulls.
Asking and asking the hostile emptiness
they were as sharp as partly sculptured stone
and all who watched, forgetting, were amazed
to see them form and fade before their eyes.

P. K. Page

P. K. PAGE (1916–). Wife of the Canadian High Commissioner to Australia. Has published two books. As Ten, As Twenty, *and* The Metal and the Flower.

Cage d'Oiseau

Je suis une cage d'oiseau
Une cage d'os
Avec un oiseau

L'oiseau dans sa cage d'os
C'est la mort qui fait son nid

Lorsque rien n'arrive
On entend froisser ses ailes

Et quand on a ri beaucoup
Si l'on cesse tout à coup
On l'entend qui roucoule
Au fond
Comme un grelot

C'est un oiseau tenu captif
La mort dans ma cage d'os
Voudrait-il pas s'envoler
Est-ce vous qui le retiendrez
Est-ce moi
Qu'est-ce que c'est

Il ne pourra s'en aller
Qu'après avoir tout mangé
Mon cœur
La source du sang
Avec la vie dedans

Il aura mon âme au bec.

Saint-Denys-Garneau

SAINT-DENYS-GARNEAU (1912–1943). Montreal. His collected poems were published in 1949. He also wrote Journal, *his only published work in prose.*

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Kathleen Raine

Blake and Tradition

AS IN all else, Blake's relation to tradition is one of extreme paradox: for is he not the very type of the inspired visionary, the supreme instance of a poet and artist whose work rises out of that ever-living intellectual fountain within the soul itself; or from that collective unconscious, or *spiritus mundi*, that magicians of the past, and psychologists of the present, alike believe to be the storehouse of the unrecorded memories of mankind? Blake himself tells how the poem "Milton" was written, "from immediate Dictation," as he says. It has seemed to at least one Jungian psychologist that if there exists an instance of an artist who has produced works of genius from the unconscious alone, that artist is Blake. Seen less kindly, his apparent disregard for all illumination but that from within, might seem to justify Mr. T. S. Eliot's strictures on Blake as a poet outside the great tradition. "We have the same respect for Blake's philosophy," Mr. Eliot has written, "that we have for an ingenious piece of home-made furniture: we admire the man who has put it together with the odds and ends about the house."

It is time that this criticism should be answered, not by a rejection of Mr. Eliot's view of tradition, but by a re-examination of Blake's. For Blake was working in a tradition—some would say in *the* Tradition—of the perennial philosophy of absolute spiritual knowledge and its unchanging symbols. Yeats, himself an initiate of the Western occult schools and a student of Indian philosophy, knew this; he saw in Blake not a symbolic innovator, but an initiate, using the traditional symbolic language with the same almost mathematical exactness that we find in Cabbalism, Neoplatonism, and Vedantic literature. He had, Yeats found, "those hard symbolic bones under the skin." The greatest 20th century exponent of traditional symbolism, Ananda Coomaraswami, when he wished to point to a Western traditional poet, habitually referred to Dante, or to Blake.

This article is an expanded version of a speech made at the William Blake annual dinner, at which the guest of honour was Professor Foster Damon, author of "William Blake, His Philosophy and Symbols." It was Professor Damon who first drew attention to Blake's debt to traditional sources—Neoplatonic, Hermetic, Vedantic. Since the publication of Professor Damon's book in 1924 it has been the fountainhead of Blake scholarship. Even now the full significance of the clues first uncovered by Professor Damon has not been grasped, for by these and subsequent discoveries we are forced to reconsider the question of Blake's relation to tradition. KATHLEEN RAINE

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MR. ELIOT'S essay on Blake was written in 1920; and Professor Damon's book had not yet been published, with the first indications scholarship had yet given that Blake knew the works of Plato and Plotinus, something of Indian philosophy, and was in fact a far more deeply read man than had formerly been supposed. These implications have not been pursued, chiefly, it may be, because in spite of Mr. Eliot this remains an age that neither understands nor values tradition. Because we value innovation rather than truth, opinion rather than knowledge, we have praised Blake for his originality in just those things in which he is least original. We have seen him as a symbolic romantic, akin to the Surrealists and other decadent schools whose symbols were, as Blake's never were, reflections of the personal unconscious. Much harm has come to the arts from this false conception of originality, by a symbolic romanticism, not to say anarchy, that introduces obscurity not only into the present (which hardly matters, in art so ephemeral) but also into the past. It has been forgotten that such poets as Virgil, Dante, Spenser, Milton, Blake, Coleridge, and Yeats, speak a traditional symbolic language, from whose essential terms they never departed. When Blake describes the sea, river, cave, tree, marsh, forest, smoke, or dark valley, the elm, the funeral urns, the symbols are old, not new, nor does he ever do violence to their traditional meanings.

But there are traditions and traditions: "The conscious present is an awareness of the past," Mr. Eliot wrote in his famous essay on *Tradition and the Individual Talent*; and by the "past," it seems that he means the Latin tradition; for, he says, Blake's ideas "illustrate the crankiness, the eccentricity, which frequently affects writers outside the Latin tradition." Certainly Blake's tradition was not Mr. Eliot's. He hated the Latin tradition; but he rejected it because it seemed to him a departure, a deviation, from one older and more fundamental, from the truths divinely revealed to the prophets of antiquity, that he calls "the religion of Jesus." Blake's symbolic language is strange to us because it is original not in the sense of being new, but because it is original in the sense of being old—a return to the origins. Our failure to recognise this is the measure of our own alienation—the progressive alienation of the Latin tradition, if you will—from the roots of human wisdom. "The antiquities of every Nation under Heaven is no less sacred than that of the Jews. They are the same thing—all had originally one language and one religion." These are not the words of a romantic innovator; Blake laboured only to restore what had been lost, to discover the underground channels and broken clues that should lead us back to the sources, the "originals" as he calls them, which were possessed by the ancient religions of Asia.

Blake knew Mr. Eliot's tradition, and he rejected it. It belongs, he said, to the Daughters of Memory, and not to the Daughters of Inspiration. The muses of Memory are of an inferior order, because their tradition exists only in history. It belongs to time. Precedent in itself becomes a kind of authority in this external, historical tradition. Opinion has the same weight as vision, if only it is expressed with sufficient force, or elegance, to make an impact upon the course of events. But, for Blake, there are absolutes of imaginative knowledge—as there are for Plato. Blake's prophetic or poetic genius is Plato's *noesis*, translated by Milton and by Coleridge as *reason*, the direct insight into reality. Now, it is this visionary knowledge that lies alike at the root of tradition (in Blake's sense), and of the individual genius. "As all men are alike (tho' infinitely various) so all Religions, etc., as all similars, have one source. The true Man is the source, he being the Poetic Genius." Vision is not opinion—as Mr. Eliot implies when he writes of Blake *inventing* a philosophy of his own. Opinion is the very essence of individualism, even when it is widely shared; vision can never be so—it must necessarily, as it did for Blake, give rise to continuity with that tradition which alone has value because it is established upon a foundation of metaphysical

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knowledge, "knowledge unqualified," the name which it still bears throughout the East.* Tradition and vision are at one in a tradition that exists in order to perpetuate this absolute knowledge; nor, in the absence of vision, can a secular and historical tradition perpetuate or ever discover these absolutes. Literary "influence," as described in Mr. Eliot's memorable formula "the conscious present is an awareness of the past," may be no more than the blind leading the blind, a plunge into darkness.

IT IS only just to say that, as a poet at all events, it is clear that Mr. Eliot means more than this by tradition. The essays from which I have quoted are both early, and there is no doubt that his own use, in his poems, of tradition is, to a great extent, an uncovering of the "originals." But the influence of his criticism remains, and must be answered.

It all depends upon what we think of the Western tradition. To Blake it seemed, by the 18th century, not so much a preservation of the forms of wisdom and beauty as a deviation from these. It seems so more now than then. Has it not seemed so to T. S. Eliot the poet, who shows us that the tradition of the Daughters of Memory is a heap of broken images in a Waste Land? Whatever Blake sacrificed by rejecting the Latin tradition, it was not the essentials of poetry. The accidents, indeed, he did sacrifice. If the best minds of a number of generations are engaged in certain æsthetic pursuits, a certain virtuosity, skill, and polish, a manner, a style must result,† and these Blake scorned, at a certain cost, undoubtedly, to his work. Admitting that Blake sacrificed much, one may observe that the culture he rejected really was in decadence, as our own time shows. His early poem "To the Muses" makes this point:

How have you left your antient love
That bards of old enjoy'd in you!
The languid strings do scarcely move!
The sound is forc'd, the notes are few!

A renewal at source was necessary, even at the expense of a rejection of the whole of a secular tradition of the arts. Blake's golden string leads not merely through personal vision into the ever-present world of the archetypes—though it does that also—but, and this is the more significant fact, it shows us the way back to the sources from which Western Christendom has progressively deviated.

Where did Blake look for the lost threads? Not in historical or scholastic Christianity, but in its roots, the Gospels and the Mosaic philosophy; not in the late and secularised copies of ancient myths, but in the Eddas, in Homer, Hesiod, the Hymns of Orpheus; not in the disputations of 17th century English theologians, but in the works of Plotinus and Proclus, the Pymander of Hermes, the Baghavad Gita. Ovid and Virgil, Plato, Plutarch, Porphyry and Apuleius, these are the formative influences of Blake's thought and symbols, from the "Songs of Experience" onwards — scarcely the "odds and ends" that Mr. Eliot finds there. It may be argued that some other of Blake's sources are less reputable—the alchemists and Cabbalists, Paracelsus, Agrippa, Fludd, Thomas Vaughan, or the inspired Jacob Boehme whom Coleridge also loved. But on these matters opinion is changing. Has not Jung recently re-evaluated the symbolism of alchemy? Blake has been called mad, and Yeats foolish, in their studies of these subjects; but can it be only chance that two symbolist poets of such towering stature turned to the same sources? The ignorance may prove to be our own.

FAR from wishing to appear an innovator, Blake filled his writings with allusions to his sources, unmistakable to those who possess the key. This was certainly deliberate —he wished to place himself in a certain context, and to give us the necessary clues—much as Mr. Eliot himself has done in his poems. But to be within a tradition is in no way to sacrifice freedom, when that tradition

* I am quoting the words of René Guénon, a leading exponent of traditionalism in this century.

† Mr. Stephen Spender raised this question, of the sacrifice involved in rejecting the values of the dominant culture of any time or place.

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is itself based upon visionary truth. Traditional symbols, to the visionary, are not the rigid and immutable entities that they are alike for those religions and those arts that see them in their historical, rather than their metaphysical, context. Tradition becomes plastic in the hands of the visionary. Blake did not hesitate to give new names to the gods—he had to do this in order to free the living realities from their association, through Greek, Christian, or Norse names, with particular times and places. These entities he knew to be no less living in the 18th century than in the world of antiquity; but in these new names, he gives us clues to their earlier and diverse identities. There are clear indications that identify Orc with the Hebrew Esau, the Norse wolf Fehris, the Cupid of Apuleius, the classical god Orcus, and Milton's devastated Eden, "haunt of Orcs and scales, and seamews clang." So in the myth of Tharmas, we are given clues to his identity with the Dionysus of the Mysteries; with the archetypal man of the "Divine Pymander"; the Hindu Tamas; the Thaumas of Plato and Hesiod; with the figure of Narcissus, according to Plotinus's reading of the myth; and the Hermaphroditus of Ovid. And so, I have come to believe, with every character and theme in the poetic books. When Blake fails, it is not through the inarticulate obscurity of a too personal language, but through an over-loading of his work with allusion. The consciousness of the present—or the past, or the future—so Blake would have replied to Mr. Eliot, is awareness not of the past, but of the eternal. What seems the main-stream of knowledge to the secular mind, may not seem so to the visionary, who can perceive how far it has deviated from "knowledge absolute."

Mr. Eliot, in the name of tradition, has demanded a conservatism. Blake, in the name of tradition, demanded a restitution. Blake was a revolutionary; but not in order to establish something new, but to re-establish what is unchanging. He did something more than add another monument to the procession of history: he sought to restore poetry and painting to their true function, as the servants of metaphysical knowledge—to re-create a true religious art, from which æstheticism of every kind is a mere decadence. The proof of the compelling power of his thought is Blake's ever-growing influence. His visions are working like leaven in the thought of the present time, for are we not beginning to realise the truth of Plato's words, that the city can never prosper unless it is founded upon the Originals?

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ASPECTS OF MODERN ENGLISH PAINTING (I)

Colin MacInnes: THE KING'S GUESTS

But at this point civilisation ended: for we had entered upon that arid and blistering vacuum—those festoons of mud-caked wire, those miniature mountain-ranges of saffron earth, and trees like gibbets . . .

FROM 1914 to 1918 all European minds were obsessed by the image of the Western Front: obsessed perhaps as they had never been by any symbol of catastrophe before, and certainly as they could never be by any in the future. For whatever disasters were to come afterwards, there was in 1914 a confidence and innocence of spirit that could be tortured by the thought of systematic carnage: shocked in a way that was no longer possible for those, less faithful and less hopeful, who lived after the Great War.

Though nations endured the four years with fortitude, few had the dangerous courage to look steadfastly at the war with open eyes. Some artists, too, even among those called "War Artists," contrived to see no more than a landscape with figures on the Western Front. But others dared to expose their single minds to the universal horror and, by the force of their imaginations, pinned it within the bounds of human sympathy and understanding. When one reflects, even for a moment, on the enormity of the war on the Western Front, and then on the modesty of the English school of painting at the turn of the century, the triumphs which these artists wrested from the war seem even more amazing. No less astonishing, in a different way, is the very fact that there were such people as "War Artists" at all; and that the official choice should so often have been of men who were young, unorthodox in style and personality, little known to the general public—and highly talented.

THIS national achievement was partly due to a personal misfortune. Charles Masterman was a Christian liberal who had published sociological studies (*From the Abyss*, *In Peril of Change*) and served as literary editor of the *Daily News* before his election to Parliament in 1906. He was a junior minister under Churchill and Lloyd George, and by his appointment, in February 1914, as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, he became one of the Cabinet which declared war on August 4th. But promoted ministers had in those days to seek re-election; and twice unsuccessful, Masterman, to Asquith's great regret and to his own, was forced to resign from the Cabinet in February 1915. He was immediately made director of the Propaganda Department, later to be absorbed into the Ministry of Information, and he remained at this post until the last days of the war.

It was this disappointed politician turned unconventional civil servant who devised the War Artists scheme. Its purpose was that the pictures, exhibited at home and reproduced abroad, should sustain public morale, foster solidarity between civilians and the soldiers overseas, and win over neutrals to the allied cause. Masterman saw, as few did then, that truth, for any government that dares, and can afford, to tell it, is ultimately the most persuasive form of propaganda. He set up a War Artists committee, his advisers were Arnold Bennett, Campbell Dodgson, and Robert Ross, and the first official artist they selected was Muirhead Bone.

From the point of view of the expansion and success of the scheme, the choice could hardly have been better. Bone was a draughtsman whose scrupulous, documentary style would make as favourable an impression as could be hoped for on the military mind, and yet he was undeniably an artist—one whose dark, meticulous drawings were infused with a poetic sense of wonder at the ordinary. Moreover, he was a large-minded man with a lively sympathy for the work of younger and more audacious colleagues. In July 1916, Bone left for the Western Front with his sketch-books and (one trembles retrospectively for him!) the rank of second

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lieutenant. It is a lively proof of his tact and determination that the only official War Artist in Flanders at that time should have operated so successfully with a rank scorned even by lance-corporals.

Soon he was followed by William Orpen (this time with the rank of major) who reached France in the following spring. Arnold Bennett thought that Orpen's "resourcefulness is as reliable and unerring as that of Mozart." Wyndham Lewis found his drawings "pallid and sentimental." One sees what both mean, and here I should mention a difficulty one may experience in judging the quality of a great many pictures of World War One painted by artists of a second- or third-rate order. The fact is that, just as the war did turn commonplace men into heroes, so even bad pictures of the 1914 war often possess a sort of glow, a gleam of conviction that shines through indifferent forms and clammy paint. There is a picture, for instance, by Alfred Heyward, in the Imperial War Museum, called *The Staff Train at Charing Cross Station, 1918*. The design is loose, the drawing flabby, and the colours garish; yet there is no doubt that the artist felt the poignancy of this perpetual farewell of troops going back from leave, and that he imposes his mood on the beholder. There, beside the ornate Edwardian pullman, stand the generals, French and British, in dignified, fatuous groups. There stands the pretty Red Cross nurse, Edith Cavell to the hem of her long skirt; and there the young Scots officer, posturing gaily between his subdued, huge-hatted parents, marked with the joy of one who will never return. One's eyes move from this lurid illustration to the noble, static groups of soldiers by Nevinson and Meninsky on either side, and the Charing Cross picture evaporates in turpentine. But it leaves a sharp imprint on one's mind, like that of a tale told by an innocent who has seen a vision.

Critics irritated C. R. W. Nevinson when they told their readers he was a "journalist," which he was not: journalists don't feel so strongly, or generalise the particular so boldly. But Orpen was a journalist: quick, sharp, with a bright eye for local colour (*The Mad Woman of Douai*) and a clever mind for a novel twist (*Adam and Eve at Péronne*), he has left us a War Correspondent's snapshot of "interesting" generals, "sinister" politicians, and picturesque privates going through hell or packing up their troubles in oils bathed by limelight, deft and seductive as a conjuring trick. Yet it's a vivid picture on that level and, in its way, a true one; and one has only to compare it with those of other portrait-painter War Artists to see its merits. John Lavery, for instance, the painter of the Navy, has said of his own pictures, in words that silence further criticism: "Instead of the grim harshness and horror of the scene I had given charming colour versions as if painting a bank holiday on Hampstead Heath." Nor was Sargent any more successful. His huge frieze *Gassed*, with its ballet of blinded sufferers, seems wonderfully untroubled by emotion. Even Augustus John, with his fatal Midas gift for imposing beauty rather than creating it, has left a graceful portrait of lissom Canucks and Tommies, elegantly disposed among decorative ruins.

Most of these celebrities went overseas in the last year of the war when Lord Beaverbrook, who had become first Minister of Information, began to let painters loose on all the battlefronts. But Nevinson, Wyndham Lewis, and Paul Nash, like most of the younger men, were not even permanent official artists: they were sent out to France for limited periods and with a very ambiguous status. Though holding a passport that described them, rather peculiarly, as "the King's Guest," their uniform, so Nevinson tells us, was "a bastard affair . . . no badges for my cap or lapels, no pips or crowns, and on my arm a brassard with the letter 'P'." With junior officers and field-marshals they seem to have got on well enough, but at brigadier level they ran into difficulties, were baulked, reprimanded, and frequently arrested. The recurring villain of their memoirs is "Intelligence 'F', G.H.Q.," to which department they were attached. When Nevinson, for instance, went swanning off to survey the massacre at Passchendaele, he was summoned back and told:

Major, Intelligence "F": Aren't you aware that you are forbidden to go to that section of the line?

The King's Guest: No. Nobody ever instructed me to keep away from it.

Major, Intelligence "F": Of course not. We were forbidden to tell you.

But to deal with the impertinence of their superiors, these younger painters were formidably equipped, for they were veterans who had all seen active service as anonymous volunteers before they met Beaverbrook or Masterman. And that is also one of the two reasons why they became the true, the authentic war painters. The other is that, unlike their elders, they had all experimented, in the last years of the peace, with pictorial styles which could be admirably adapted to the portrayal of the theme of war.

THESE styles, one or more of which influenced all painters of real significance in World War One, were Cubism, Futurism, and Vorticism. The impact of Cubism was the most decisive, yet the most oblique. For Cubism, though it was by far the most radical of the

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three, is not a style which, in its true form, can lend itself to the illustrative, descriptive needs of a war picture. Early Cubism was concerned with the analysis of natural forms and, eventually, with their reconstruction into new, invented shapes: the subject (were it a soldier, a bottle, a guitar) was almost incidental. But a war painting is immensely concerned with subject—at any rate, a war painting as the Department of Propaganda would understand it. One may think that if some of the artists had been working "for themselves," and not for Masterman, they might have attempted true cubist paintings of the war (if one can speak of such a thing), and might have been less intent on making images which, with a little goodwill, could easily be grasped by the uninitiated public which was the target of their propaganda. To me this seems unlikely. Firstly, because I do not think that any English artist at that time was ever consistently interested in Cubism as an end in itself. Secondly, because those war pictures I have been able to see which these artists painted for their own purposes, so to speak, before they became War Artists, were already illustrative and descriptive of the war. And yet in these pictures, as in those they painted later, there are often borrowings of cubist devices, used out of their true pictorial context in an unorthodox way, but adapted very effectively to convey atmosphere, sensation, or emotion: for instance, in the angular rigidity of a massed column of marching men, in the patterned squares made by airplanes, shells, and searchlights in the sky, or in the formal identity between the shapes of a soldier's body and those of the metal of his gun.

Futurism influenced principally Nevinson and, though they subsequently rejected it, the Vorticists. The ideology of Futurism, composed of a headlong antipathy to "tradition" and a dogmatic passion for machines, war, and the depersonalisation of art, was given shape in paintings that portrayed, or sought to portray, the "dynamic" force of bleak, mechanised forms in movement. A year as a hospital orderly was enough to destroy Nevinson's sympathy for the ideology, but in his war pictures something of the style remains: a style obviously suited to the inhuman aspect of trench warfare, and yet one which Nevinson, rejecting the hysteria of its orthodox forms, adapted resolutely to the needs of his own essentially humanist art.

But it was the Vorticists—especially Wyndham Lewis and William Roberts—who in their war paintings used the style of their choice in the most consistent way. Notable above all for its negations, Vorticism had rejected—of course—Impressionism ("too realistic"), Cubism ("another form of naturalism"), Futurism ("too tyrannically literary"), and Abstract art ("in a cul-de-sac of sentiment, dehumanised, unrelated to visual experience of life"). This last criticism is the key to what was positive in Vorticism. Although, as did Futurism, it praised "the hard, the cold, the mechanised" and "sought out machine forms," the Vorticists, unlike the Futurists, believed these hard cold forms should be dominated, inhabited by, the human spirit. "You cannot convey the emotion you receive at the content of nature by imitating her but only by becoming her," said Wyndham Lewis.

Yet it is Nevinson, more than all others, who seems to me to be the most memorable painter of the first war. The theme had hypnotised him even before the war itself began. In 1913, at an exhibition in Holland Park skating rink, he had shown a picture "painted mostly of sand to make a contrast with the shining, metallic guns, called *War*." In 1914 he went at once to France, and "when a month had passed I felt I had been born in the nightmare." As soon as he was invalided out of the Medical Corps, in 1916, he showed at the Leicester Galleries, on his own initiative, an exhibition of war paintings (sympathetically introduced by General Sir Ian Hamilton) that brought him within reach of Masterman's roving eye and eager hand. As a War Artist, he concentrated (as not all "War Artists" did) on scenes of men in battle. Some of his pictures, like *The Doctor* (probing an intimate wound) or *Paths of Glory* (the dead among wire and mud), were considered "nasty" as, indeed, though sober and factual, they are. Some, like his huge *Harvest of Battle*, a panorama of disaster, are painted almost naturalistically and with a fairly evident "anti-war" intent. But the typical Nevinson war picture, painted in an austere expressionist style with cubist overtones and futurist borrowings, is one in which the soldiers' own reaction to the dead life at the front is relentlessly conveyed: the loathing of war and yet the acceptance of it, the horror and the curiosity, the compassion and the indifference. And though there are much better paintings than *The Road from Arras to Bapaume*, this still seems, after forty years have gone, the characteristic picture of the war. That road which leads from nowhere to nowhere over four shrinking horizons, human beings lost in the vast waste they have created—the idea is almost as trite as that of *The Boyhood of Raleigh*, the drawing far feebler than in even Nevinson's best paintings, and yet how compellingly, how inevitably, this small picture conveys, without justification or complaint, the universal feeling about the deadlock in the West, one of hope and resignation, or resolution and despair.

Wyndham Lewis had seen active service as an artillery officer until he was press-ganged by

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Lord Beaverbrook in 1917. His artistic apprenticeship had been no less thorough, for in the years before the war he had launched the Vorticist movement and was, with Ezra Pound, its principal theorist. The first copy of the manifesto *Blast* had appeared in June 1914 ("Life was one big bloodless brawl, prior to the Great Bloodletting"), and the first (and last) Vorticist exhibition was held before he left for the army a year later. What is particular to Wyndham Lewis's vision of the war is that, although he knew too much of it to "glorify" it, he did openly accept it as a phenomenon that was as exciting as it was terrible; and in the startling description of the Western Front from which I quoted briefly at the beginning of this essay, he speaks of "those titanic casts of dying and shell-shocked actors, who charged this stage with a romantic electricity." The term "romantic" is used, I think, to describe a quality that all the best war paintings reveal: a feeling that men lived more intensely, with heightened awareness, in the inferno. ("Life has a greater meaning here and a new zest, and beauty is more poignant," wrote Paul Nash from the trenches.) About this excitement that war inspires there is something of a conspiracy of silence; but all soldiers have felt it, and it is very apparent in Lewis's own masterpiece, *A Battery Shelled*, in which soldiers, metal, guns, smoke, and earth are all infused with the same inner electric tension—the "essential movement and activity" of the Vorticist manifestos; and in which these natural objects are made to live vividly again as creations of "the energy of a mind."

If Nevinson and Lewis became War Artists with styles already well developed, it is not too much to say that Paul Nash's talent was completely transformed by his experiences in the war. Sympathetic critics have seen in the landscape and figure drawings he did before 1914 (he had not yet painted in oils) a fervour, a poetry, a "mysticism" recalling those of William Blake. These qualities were there in embryo, and it is true that in all Nash's art there is something of a "Wordsworthian" apprehension of a spirit that inhabits nature's shapes. But in the pre-war drawings this was expressed by the most tentative pictorial means: the landscapes were limp and decorative, the "mystical" figures more those of a pale post-pre-Raphaelite than of a follower of Blake. In 1914 Nash enlisted in the Artists Rifles, and three years later he was commissioned in the Hampshire Regiment and served on the front near Ypres. His letters home reveal an intense preoccupation with the physical grandeur of trench landscape ("Oh, these wonderful trenches at night, at dawn, at sundown! Shall I ever lose the picture they have made in my mind . . . their rhapsody?"), and as intense a loathing for its physical degradation ("Sunset and sunrise are blasphemies . . . only the black rain out of the bruised and swollen clouds all through the bitter black night is fit atmosphere for such a land . . ."). Clearly, the accent in these descriptions of the front is on nature, rather than on man, and Nash was to be the great interpreter of the war landscape. In 1917 he held an exhibition of his trench drawings in London, which aroused Masterman's "surprising enthusiasm," and he was appointed a War Artist in that year. The pictures he painted of war scenery cannot be described in words more accurate than his own: "trenches under a bloody sort of sunset with a crescent moon sailing above," or "a rugged-looking landscape with a scarred hill in the background and stick-like trees." (The verbal descriptions which all these three artists—Nevinson, Lewis, and Nash—have made of the Western Front are as striking as their pictures, and remarkably like them.) These paintings in which human beings slink like thin spectres across a blasted, outraged nature, are extraordinarily compelling. Examined dispassionately, their drawing may still seem awkward and their colour chill and dry; but such is their inner conviction, that it is impossible to look at them without passion.

A very different world is that recorded by the War Artists of the mobile, trench-free, Middle-Eastern fronts, where war was still fought by individuals among the picturesque adjuncts of turbaned Arabs, camels, and mosques, in the heat-cracked landscapes of mountain deserts. The characteristic painter of this theatre is James McBey, official artist to the Egyptian Expeditionary Force. His style, an elegant, incisive Impressionism, and his mood of restrained lyrical enthusiasm, seem exactly suited to what was, for soldiers, by comparison with their life in the West, a "good war." Two much more original artists are the Carline brothers, Richard and Sydney, who served in the youthful Air Force. Nevinson, in the West, had already broken out of the two-dimensional world and drawn startlingly novel pictures of the war in the air as seen from the air. (Though not a flyer, he had perched in observation balloons, and had on several occasions nearly been shot down.) Even more convincing are Richard Carline's big air paintings, like *Jerusalem and the Dead Sea from an Aeroplane*, because in Nevinson's there is a defect rare in his pictures painted on the ground—a certain sensationalism, a hint of being "in the know" about this newly-discovered cloudy world, without really being of it. But Carline's vertical panoramas, painted with bird's-eye accuracy of observation, are filled with a magical sense of wonder: with the air-

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man's rapture at the soaring freedom which made the world look fresh and new, and with the artist's excitement at finding—for the first time in history—that he no longer viewed the scene from one fixed point but from many, that he was no longer even a part of the foreground of his own landscape.

Another artist whose inspiration came from a distant front is Stanley Spencer, who served as a medical orderly and infantryman in Macedonia. Usually the war painters, like the war poets, worked under the immediate impetus of experience; but Spencer, more in the manner of the war novelists (or of that rare, obsessed painter-poet, David Jones), brooded long and deeply over his troubled past, and it was not until the years between 1926 and 1932 that he produced his mural decorations for the Oratory of All Souls at Burghclere: a sequence of tableaux of episodes in the private soldier's life that culminates in the huge *Resurrection of Soldiers* on the altar wall. Though there is about this great work a great oddity—a sort of nonconformist gnosticism of spirit expressed by a self-taught eccentricity of form—its very magnitude is impressive, as is the utter conviction with which these passionate, peculiar images are painted. But in an earlier picture, his *Travoys arriving with wounded at a dressing-station, Smol, Macedonia*, of 1919, I think that Spencer's particular blend of emotional engagement and aloof visual invention is more tellingly conveyed because, in this case, his exuberant inner vision is more disciplined by convincing outer observation.

THIS painted war memorial at Burghclere, the work of a single artist for a private patron, was to have had a great national prototype: a collection of mural pictures inside a monument in Hyde Park. "Its centre," wrote Masterman, "would be largely empty or occupied by limited groups of symbolic sculpture. Round the walls would be hung a line of great size and decorative value in which each artist . . . should express . . . something of what he had to say concerning the war's meaning for him." Charles Holden prepared a design for the building, and in April 1918, Robert Ross reported to a committee on the most appropriate technique and scale for the pictures that were to be commissioned from a variety of artists. (The standard dimension he recommended was that of Ucello's *Rout of San Romano*—75 ins. by 125 ins.) But nothing came of this plan—nothing except the pictures, most of which are now skied among the weaponry of the Imperial War Museum. Those painted by soldier artists now seem the most impressive, and I would particularly mention William Roberts' *A Shell Dump, France*: a dance of death by a pattern of soldiers handling huge shells against a lowering ochred background—a record of the everlasting mixture of mud and men, the almost animal solidarity, the "mucking-in" of army life.

"Queer, isn't it," said Beaverbrook to Masterman of the collection they had amassed, "to think of the people who will be looking at this when we are dead." And here one may pause to ask: how is it possible that the English, of all people—a race not much addicted to public patronage or particularly interested in the art of painting—should have achieved this kind of success?

In the first place, it was by an extraordinarily fortunate coincidence that these two key men, Masterman and Beaverbrook, should have been interested in good painting, and should have sensed its propaganda value. (Or, to be more precise, that they should have known whom to ask for advice; since Masterman, at any rate, though well informed about contemporary literature, did not even know, until his wife pointed it out, that Muirhead Bone—whose name had just been recommended to him—was the same person as the artist whose pictures hung in his own house.) Lord Beaverbrook, too, as one would expect, was a splendid sponsor of unconventional projects and a ruthless slasher of red tape. When the startled Treasury raised difficulties, Arnold Bennett tells us that "Beaverbrook personally guaranteen £10,000 in cash, and persuaded Rothermere to do the same." And speaking of his fellow members of the War Artists committee, Bennett continues: "It constituted itself a conspiracy in aid of good painting, and of new painting in particular." (Masterman even tried to hook Max Beerbohm as a war cartoonist, but he excused himself, and suggested Louis Raemaekers.) Nor —in spite of "Intelligence 'F' "—should one forget the support that professional soldiers gave to the scheme, particularly on the higher levels: Sir Douglas Haig, for instance, was an early enthusiast for Bone's drawings (though perhaps not for some of his colleagues'), and he introduced the first volume of *The Western Front*, in which they were reproduced.

Then, from a more strictly pictorial point of view, there was the fatality that the explosion of the war should have come at the end of the most explosive decade in the history of modern painting. Years were to pass before the soldiers discovered in the tank, in gas, and in the bombing plane, the typical modern weapons of war; but the artists sprang into their own conflict armed at all points. Why was it, then, that in France, where the most effective of these weapons, Cubism, had been forged, though greater pictures than ours were painted during the war, the pictures of the war itself were not so numerous

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or remarkable as our own? Perhaps one of the many answers is that, however monstrous trench warfare may have seemed to a warrior nation like the French, it seemed even more appalling to a race that knew nothing of citizen armies or invasion like ourselves. War, as a theme, now had for our painters an awful novelty and fascination, just as it had for the public for whom they painted. This may partly account for the readiness with which the public accepted idioms which, a year before the war, would have seemed incomprehensible to them. For the first time in centuries, we had become a nation at arms, a nation whose every activity took on the character of combat; so that even the conception of a "War Artist" seemed natural to those who had hitherto cared little about art.

THIS public acceptance of the status of the War Artist was of course even more ready in 1939: no one was surprised to learn that an Artists Advisory Committee had been set up in November, and to hear its chairman, Sir Kenneth Clark, advise painters that it was their duty to stick to their easels. Official artists were assigned to the three services early in 1940, and began looking for themes appropriate to their office: but though there were War Artists, there was as yet no war.

Then, almost a year after its declaration, the war began. Horror loosed its grip upon the soldier, and seized on the civilian; and now it was of the artists of the great fires and the crowded shelters that a comparable portrait of the second war might be expected. But while the images of greatest significance were those painted on the home front, and the few original, unknown talents which the war discovered were among the Civil Defence artists, not even the best of these can bear comparison with the painters and pictures of the 1914 war.

For this there are many reasons, apart from any question of greater or lesser gifts among the artists. Firstly, there was the development of photography, and particularly of ciné-photography, since the first war—devices more effective for creating poetic documentary realism than is a paintbrush. Then—surprising as the thought may seem to us—the bombed city was not the all-embracing tragic symbol of civilian war: the concentration camps, and the roads and hutted cities with their countless uprooted refugees, are as much the real counterparts of the earlier symbol of the Western Front; but these were places of which our artists knew nothing, or caught only fleeting glimpses. From a pictorial point of view, the painters of the second war were not so well equipped. Surrealism was the only new device they had acquired since 1918; and surrealism, with its doctrinaire striving to systematise the imaginative life, with its self-conscious images, whose impact lost strength at every repetition, was already a spent force by 1939. And most of all, as I suggested at the outset, the 1939 war caused a less profound psychic wound than did that of 1914: the artists, already disillusioned, could no longer paint their agony at man's fall from grace, and nature's violation.

The two most celebrated evocations of the civilian struggle are, of course, the shelter sketches of Henry Moore and the series of "devastation" paintings by Graham Sutherland. In the work both artists did before the war there was a strong element of prophecy of the coming disaster: in Moore's lonely figures confronting their own banishment from the womb of society, and in Sutherland's portrait of nature writhing with premonition and distress. But it seems to me that, when the war came, these artists no longer dominated their theme, that they painted the fulfilment of their prophecy in a passive, acceptive spirit—with woe, but almost with fascination. The shelter drawings portray the dreadful anonymity of the entombed victims, and the "devastation" pictures the Armageddon that has descended on their doomed cities overhead. And what has always struck me about the drawings of both artists is how pretty they are, how inappropriately attractive: how decorative the corrugated shapes of Henry Moore's waiting figures, how tasteful their backgrounds of pink, green, and mauve; how luscious the orange flames of Graham Sutherland's consuming fires, how theatrical the purple ruins they destroy. Acceptance of disaster is the beginning of revolt against it, but what is lacking here is any revolt, a reassertion of human dignity, or any of the revulsion, the prayer, the phœnix-spirit rising from the ashes that are present in the air-raid picture of the child lying dead upon the cobbles, *A Taube*, which Nevinson painted thirty years before.

But one veteran of the first war repeated his triumphs in the second—Paul Nash. His pictures of airplanes (which may be considered as pictures of an aspect of the civilian war, since Nash was not interested in combat flying and was too ill himself ever to leave the ground) have the same strange quality as those he had done of the battlefronts: just as he had imparted a living spirit to inanimate nature, so did he now create "huge mammalian carcasses" out of the bombers. "Airplanes," he said, ". . . seldom resemble birds in form or habit. Their natural equivalents are to be found among the denizens of the earth or the sea, or more often in the monsters of pre-history." The predatory beasts that he invented, pilotless and possessed of an ominous purpose of their own, give a striking impression of the bomber as it seems from the

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receiving end. Small wonder that such drawings should have "disappointed the altitudes of the Air Ministry," whom Nash also displeased by painting crashed German planes: "Rather like shooting a sitting bird," he was given to understand. And so he was replaced by another veteran, Eric Kennington, whose star-studded pastels of pilots and virile strategists have not the same stalwart tenderness as *The Kensingtons at Laventie*, the group of boy warriors he painted on glass in World War One; and Nash left the service of the Ministry to develop his theme of dead aircraft in one of the few memorable paintings of the second war, *Totes Meer*.

The example of Paul Nash, who found in both wars a rich inspiration, may prompt a question that also comes to the mind of any visitor leaving the Imperial War Museum: why is it that so many who were great artists of the first war declined into dullness and repetition in the succeeding peace? It is hardly enough to quote the depressing precedent that English painters often do fail to fulfil an initial splendid promise. Then is the sudden withdrawal of public sympathy at the end of the war an explanation? The War Artists, even those who used experimental styles, had enjoyed for four years the sudden understanding of the nation, whose unconscious inner feelings they had made manifest; not to mention the unusual boon of an assured and respected status in public life. After the war, they returned to the little jungle of the studios and art galleries; and for the great public, which seems congenitally incapable of grasping a pictorial experience imaginatively, unless it has also lived through it realistically, "modern art" relapsed once more to the status of a cherished joke. I can think of but one other reason, which is that English artists, with certain notable exceptions, have often greatly depended on the inspiration of subject, rather than on that of the investigation of the forms by which their subject is to be conveyed; so that deprived of the terrible visions of 1914–18, many could find neither as intense a theme of their own imagining, nor the stimulus of those formal discoveries by which these personal themes might have been expressed. But these tentative explanations seem to me inadequate, and I think that the decline after 1918 must have its roots in profounder causes, social and pictorial, which affected European painting as a whole; and which also prevented the official art of the second war from being any more than it was—a well-intentioned attempt to repeat deliberately a success which had been achieved in 1914 spontaneously, and almost by accident.

Colin McInnes

An Ordinary Care

Visit the rumoured stranger on the stair,
Though you to find him must go round and round.
Upon the lowest landing, by a bare
Window that opens on some barer ground
Plain in plain light, the one you seek is found.

These months of early cold, unripe November,
A slant of light, trembling, a virgin's tone,
Yet so much loved and wanted to remember
Against its end, or yours. But he, alone,
Keep inward excellence of skeleton.

Then stand, say nothing; nothing you believe
Or think you do, will he: and smile, and sigh.
Your hand, your hands in his, like blows relieve
Not helplessness or sorrow, but self-pity.
He missed, one day in Spring, his time to die.

Dom Moraes

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Radio

The Third Programme and the Spoken Word

How strange it is that a country which is not particularly notable for the confidence, music, or eloquence of its spoken language, which does not easily become intoxicated with words and the sound of its own voice, should have developed the techniques of spoken-word broadcasting so much more earnestly and successfully than any other. Yet, if the Third Programme's tenth anniversary must be cause for congratulation and grateful recollection to many (especially music-lovers), there is one field in which memories bring disappointment, that of the talk, where so much of the BBC's earlier influence had been won. Somehow, the Third, while disseminating millions of words and a deluge of ideas, has failed to find a voice. Nor—to offer a hazardous judgment—has it made that impression upon public attitudes which other sources of opinion and comment no less strict in their intellectual standards have been able to do.

In 1951, Harman Grisewood, the second of the programme's three Controllers, wrote: "... With the start of the Third Programme, the world of the University and the world of broadcasting for the first time became well known to each other." There was the assumption indeed that an audience existed which may have listened to music, may have tuned in perhaps to Itma or the nine o'clock news, to A. J. Alan or C. H. Middleton, Desmond McCarthy or Alistair Cooke, but which had not taken broadcasting seriously as a source of ideas. Such people were to form a new body of listeners, Third Programme listeners. From within the Corporation, however, it was easy to forget that such an audience does not need simply to be drawn away from other programmes, but has to be won from evening work, from reading, from conversation, and so on.

From the outset, the Third intended to alter the state of spoken-word broadcasting as it was then conceived—by accepting as broadcasters many whose voices had previously made them unsuitable for a larger audience or who had been unready to conform to the requirements of writing for the ear or popularise their ideas; by entering areas of knowledge, speculation, and criticism which had not before been explored on the air; by allowing the subject to determine the length of the programme or the size of a series, rather than considerations of programme planning and persuasions of Listener Research; by avoiding verbal or vocal devices of presentation intended to sweeten the dish. In those early days of excitement and intoxicating freedom, when I remember myself commissioning a talk called Elephantographia (on the drawing of elephants in the Renaissance) which was delivered sadly and with a plethora of footnotes, certain of the inescapable conditions of speaking on the air were, if not forgotten, sometimes set aside.

With the arrival of academic subjects and academic speakers who wanted to do themselves justice and make definitive statements, with the erection of such a vast monument to the new seriousness as "Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians," whose intricate structure few listeners could be expected even to scan, it was easy to forget that broadcasting is an ephemeral thing and that it loses its identity if it is regarded simply as a means to publication in *The Listener* or to the compilation of a vast library of recorded archives. BBC producers talk about obtaining "space" for their programmes, but it would be better if they used the word "time," because broadcasting has the fluidity of time. Except in the case of music and drama, where its function is simply that of a transmitting machine, broadcasting has the character of a newspaper and not of a book; it is related to journalism and not to the learned periodical or the academic discourse.

The broadcast word is even more transient than journalism, because it can never be given an immediate second reading or recall. Even for those with knowledge of the ideas discussed, or exceptional memories and powers of concentration, there is a limit to the density and complexity of the statement which a broadcaster may intelligibly offer. There is not a separate vocabulary and syntax for broadcast English, but there

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are certain limitations and conventions which need to be observed, a certain texture of thought and expression which are equally appropriate for an account of the quantum theory and for advice on the storing of onions. The broadcast talk happens at a moment and the performance must be attended then. It imposes upon the listener not just the author's verbal style, but the qualities and limitations of his voice and utterance. If one necessity of good broadcasting is that the material it offers should not have hardened or congealed, so the capable broadcaster may not only recount a description or an argument in living language but at the moment of delivery can restore to the sound of words the energy and sincerity of the original thought and feeling. All this is obvious to anyone with any experience of radio as listener or performer, but I have restated it in order to suggest that broadcasting is a clumsy and uneconomical medium for direct education, for intellectual exposition at a high level, for definitive or exhaustive statement, or for complex argument of an abstract kind—and especially in times of extensive adult education, public libraries, and Pelican books.

THERE has, of course, been much excellent material broadcast and much enjoyable speaking, but I believe that the Third Programme's general policy has been mistaken in its readiness to neglect—sometimes to abandon—radio's peculiar capabilities and limitations. The broadcast talk is particularly adapted to narrative and to the description of places, occasions, and events. I recall one or two stories by P. H. Newby drawn from his Egyptian experiences, and various topographical talks by V. S. Pritchett, Geoffrey Grigson, Christopher Salmon, and others, as some of the pleasantest occasions in ten years' listening. Laurie Lee's brilliant account of a visit to Poland in a recent number of ENCOUNTER was fine radio material. One of the outstanding disappointments, in fact, has been the failure of the Third to discover any broadcasting columnists of their own, or perhaps it has been a failure to give regular time and encouragement to those who have occasionally presented themselves. There has been no talker who has tempted us to switch on as Alistair Cooke does on the Home Service, in the hope and the expectation that this week he may be at his best. It has been a Third Programme policy not to establish fixed spots of this kind, but such regularity is helpful, and a readiness to turn to the same thing week by week, to follow some routine, is a habit even of the most austere minds. The Third Programme listener is surely intelligent enough to understand if for some special event the time has to be changed.

Next to narrative there is conversation, a spoken form which has until recent years been difficult to capture because of the unrelaxing atmosphere of the studio, but which through technical advances in the recording and editing of speech is now easy to project. Literary conversation in particular did occur with some regularity in the early years, but it has never I believe been sufficiently exploited, any more than has the form of the debate, as a means of expressing both thought and opinion. One important quality of programmes based upon conversation or argument is not just their dramatic vitality, but the fact that the texture of conversation language, however much it may need to be tidied and tightened through editing on tape or disc, is also the texture of acceptable listening. The informal portraits of Joyce, Shaw, and others compiled from conversation have been outstandingly successful.

In 1946 George Barnes wrote: "Above all the [Third] programme will experiment. If the experiments succeed, we shall adopt them for our wider audiences in other programmes." Experiment is perhaps too large a word for the devices or methods of programme-building which can be tried in talks broadcasting, but it is disappointing to realise that most of the innovations in technique over the past ten years have appeared in the Home Service and the Light Programme. In terms of broadcast conversation, there has been the Home Service's "Frankly Speaking"—borrowed from a French idea—in which notables are cross-examined by a group of three questioners. There are surely a number of other and perhaps more serious usages for this simple but extremely effective form. Edited conversation may be a more appropriate broadcasting form for some eminent minds than the straight talk. It is curious also that the Third has not tried to extend and improve the method used in "The Critics" (on the Home Service) so as to transform what is at present a programme of variable conversation into one of properly critical discussion.

CONVERSATION and impromptu debate are also, in the age of the tape recorder, a means of bringing intelligent opinion on current disputes immediately to the microphone. One of the enemies of broadcasting is inflexibility, or any condition which encourages it. The week-by-week sameness of the *Radio Times*'s make-up and the fact that it needs to go to press about two weeks before the day of broadcast has been one cause of this. The other services have in recent years invented various means of overcoming the problem and one of the most notable introductions has been the twice-weekly programme of topical comment "At Home and

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Abroad" on the Home Service. This has managed to discover not only authority but a mood of suspense, because on so many occasions of crisis or conflict it has brought immediately to the microphone, and often subjected to probing cross-examination, those whose knowledge and opinion was at that moment most pertinent. The programme gains part of its strength from being a reflection of the very nature of radio. The Third Programme has always distrusted topicality, and although current affairs are regularly discussed it is generally when the matter is relatively current and then often with an infuriating obliquity. I have sometimes suspected that the real organiser of the Third may in fact be the spirit of the late Julien Benda.

This distaste for topicality is surely based upon a misunderstanding of the contemporary mood, for all of us not only are, but must be, concerned with what has happened in the past twenty-four hours; and good as much current affairs broadcasting is on the other services, the Third with its freedom of planning could have much to offer. I have already suggested that the texture of Third Programme speaking has often been too dense and uniform. That is also the case with the body of talks as a whole, the majority of which seem to have found their way on to the air only after long deliberation and having passed through the same censorial sieve. The element of immediacy would help to correct this inflexible respectability. Topicality need not be simply political but should extend into every activity of life, for radio is at its best when it moves with the speed of events and joins the present clash of ideas and opinions; its most effective programmes are those which are, so to speak, open-ended; it is by its very nature an inappropriate medium for what is final or monolithic.

The Third Programme has always been careful to preserve the standards which it has erected, and few would wish it to surrender them; but in the field of the spoken word it needs now, I believe, to transfer those standards to a profoundly different policy, for which immediacy, flexibility, informality, a decent opportunism, liveliness of language, a loose verbal texture, and the qualities of the finest journalism should be the guides.

Basil Taylor

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"Beware of Your Personality"

MR. WHYTE'S warning cry against the personality testers (ENCOUNTER, August) should be heeded everywhere. His examples are American, and it is true that Testing has sprouted fastest in America, where its combination of efficiency and mystical scientific authority has a strong nationalistic appeal. But the first Tester, say the textbooks, was an Englishman, Sir Francis Galton, in 1882, and no Western nation is free of his offspring today. The time is near, we may surmise, when no diplomat or schoolteacher or steam-fitter or janitor will be hired for, or fired from, any post without having first to draw lines between dots, find the proper analogy in:

As mother is to child, so is hen to (*a*) *rooster*
(*b*) *ax*
(*c*) *chicken*
(*d*) *farmer*,

read stories into ink-blots (the Rorschach), choose favourites among portraits of inmates of central European insane asylums (the Szondi), write True or False after statements like *Sometimes I feel like a motherless child*, or pick the funnier of two jokes, as:

(*a*) *Epitaph on a waiter:*
By and by
God caught his eye.
(*b*) *First prehistoric man to second prehistoric man: "Now that we have learned to communicate with each other—Shut up!"*

(IPAT Humour Test of Personality. Woe to you if you laughed at (*a*). "Withdrawn derision," say Messrs. IPAT, is the key to your soul's structure, and will be marked on your identity papers till the day you die. If you laughed harder at (*b*) you will get credit for "pathos and calm acceptance.")

The threat is very real. These people are taking over responsibility for our private fates, a little more every day. What can we do about it? I think Mr. Whyte is much too sanguine when he offers his fairly simple system of defence. Be conventional, he says, answer the questions as if you were a sluggish, unlearned, unenterprising, uncomplicated Average Man, and thus the Testers will not be able to mark you down as any kind of odd-ball, freak, subversive, or mere eccentric. That would be good enough, if we could assume that a Tester testing for conformity knows how to find it. But a vast literature is available to inform us that it is most risky to suppose that any tester has the slightest idea of what he is really testing for.

A classic but neglected study was undertaken in the middle thirties by a group of students at Columbia University. They took a number of personality tests, which were then just coming into vogue; chose from them a set of questions to which affirmative answers were guaranteed by the authorities to be hallmarks of schizophrenia; then presented the questions to a mass of certified schizophrenics and an equal mass of "normal," that is to say unhospitalised persons. The normals answered Yes, on the average, slightly more often than the others. Someone, you will say, was crazy. There can be little doubt who: for the same tests with twenty years of triumph on their heads are still being sold and are still being given to candidates for mental hospitals to see if they are properly schizophrenic.

Perhaps those original authorities didn't start out with enough examples to draw any proper conclusions from. This is a common weakness of Testers, who after all can't spend all their time on preliminary work. Everyone remembers the epoch-making study of mental derangement undertaken a few years ago at the Menninger Clinic in Kansas—a trade journal called *The Nervous Child* said it was "by far the most important contribution to the problem of test psychology published since the beginning of this decade." This study aimed to find statistical methods of interpreting variations in the responses to certain mental tests, and accordingly administered the tests to 217 psychiatric patients, classified into nineteen clinical syndromes. (Thus barely ten syndromees to a syndrome. In ordinary life the sample would be regarded as preposterously small, but with statistics all things are

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possible.) To give a normal counterweight to the abnormal answers of the mentally ill, a "control group" of mentally healthy was needed and was promptly obtained, to wit, fifty-four Kansas Highway Patrolmen. The whole study occupies two chart-choked volumes of over 500 pages each, and rests entirely on the assumption that a man's madness is to be measured by the degree of his difference from a Kansas cop.

It is not surprising that a certain air of uncertainty should hang over the results of this enquiry. But we get on no surer ground when we turn to large-scale, scrupulous research in domains which are supposed to be far better known than clinical syndromes. Everyone knows what intelligence is, at least people have been measuring it for generations now. In 1933, the 11-year-old children of Scotland, every one of them, had their little intelligences measured. It was thereby proved (proved!) that there is an inverse relation between intelligence and size of family: the more siblings, the more stupidity. Skipping over a number of intervening assumptions—that intelligence tests measure intelligence, that 11-year-old rankings of intelligence remain stable throughout life, that intelligence is transmitted by heredity—the Testers then reasoned that since in the natural way of things large families produce more offspring in the next generation than small families, and so *ad infinitum*, the intellect of Scotland, once the loftiest in Europe, must plummet straight to Hell in short order. They maintained this Presbyterian position until 1947, when an identical, or similar, set of tests given to the then crop of 11-year-olds indicated that the general level of intelligence had taken a formidable leap upwards during the intervening generation.

Now, were the original assumptions invalid? Or were the better marks of the recent Scots a function of their current vitaminised prosperity as opposed to the sullen undernourishment of the early thirties? Or did they simply reflect a greater "test sophistication," the tendency to do better any kind of tests that come because people have to take so many these days that they have developed an instinct which can understand the Tester's intentions from far off?

No one has produced any evidence bearing on an answer to these questions. But we may say, at a hazard, that all three can be answered Yes. The first has no practical consequences for you and me, because, though it would certainly be best to refuse to take any tests at all, most of us need jobs, need money, and have no choice. The moral of the second two is that if we want to pass our tests we had better eat well and become test-sophisticated, or in plainer language, cheat.

It is not always possible to bribe a clerk to let you see the question sheet and the scoring key in advance; besides, that might tempt you to do well and arouse suspicion. The best plan is to devote a couple of weeks before you have to take one of the things to an intensive study of the tests currently on the market. There are thousands of them, but they all copy one another, so a very few will do. Most of them are sold to anyone who asks, a few are restricted and you will have to pose as a Research Institute to get their materials. At all events, get them, saturate yourself with them, let your mind fall into the hippety-hop pattern of the Tester's own. This cannot help but raise your score half a Standard Deviation or more; which is a good deal.

You will soon learn the different theoretical prejudices of the test-makers. If your man is a disciple of the Spranger Theory of Types, which says every human can be classified by his principal interest, as economic, political, religious, etc., he will give you questions like this:

If you had the choice, would you rather attend a meeting of:
(*a*) *the House of Commons*
(*b*) *the directors of English Electric*
(*c*) *the bishops of the Church of England*
(*d*) *the editors of Faber and Faber.*
(*Check one*)

If you can't answer that out of hand, you don't deserve whatever job you are applying for.

Other schools, however, furnish tests which are less easy to fake. It is notorious that if you are being marked by a Freudian you have little chance of coming out with a shred of mental health to your credit: on a Rorschach, say, if you see few sexual symbols, you are repressed; if you see many, you are overcompensating.

Increasingly the kind of test you are apt to be given is one that has been *criterion-keyed*, that is, the score is based on the answers of people who have made good in the job or profession or whatever it is that you are being tested for. If you have reason to believe your test is of this type, then you must try to put yourself in the skin of one of those people. If you want a job at a bank and they ask you, *Do you ever throw shoelaces away?* don't hurry to say No because of any early literary acquaintance with skinflint bankers. Think of some banker you know, answer for him, and all will be well.

But of course you have no guarantee that your test was actually criterion-keyed. It may have been called forth entirely by the baroque imagination of a man who spends his days among flickering Rorschach symbols. Suppose you are asked a question like this, a not uncommon type:

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If your wife (husband) was too talkative at a party, would you
(*a*) *try to silence her (him) by suasion?*
(*b*) *try to silence her (him) by force?*
(*c*) *pretend not to notice anything?*
(*d*) *reprove her (him) at home later?*

Clearly there are imaginable situations in which any of these courses of action would be indicated. To pass, the only thing you can do is to try to put yourself in the skin of a stupid psychologist making up a questionnaire.

Perhaps you don't know any stupid psychologists. Then you can only pray for a breakdown of the whole system, which despite all appearances may occur at any moment. For the more refined personality tests are made, the more it is becoming clear that they do not and cannot work. There is something coarse and refractory — untidy, unstatistical, old-Adamish — in the human brain on which the fine precision of machine-made tests snaps and snarls. A Tester I know made up a Personality Inventory of 400-odd questions, which was guaranteed, when answered and run through an IBM machine, to provide a "veridical picture of the subject's psycho-dynamics and social impact." (In old English: what a man is and what he seems. Archaic philosophies made a distinction between the two, but not the Testers. These days, as a man socially impinges, so he is.) One of the items in this remarkable document read: *I have never been in trouble with the law*. Twenty per cent of the prison population of Minnesota marked True beside this item. How can you say that? cried the exasperated Tester, seeing all his pretty figures starting to yaw out of control; what do you think you're doing here?

Oh that, said the convicts. That was a bum rap. I thought you said in *trouble* with the *law*.

It is the likes of these lumpish convicts, and not Mr. Whyte or myself, who will save us in the end.

ROBERT WERNICK

Paris

The Indian Alternative

IT IS a well-known practice of the Communist countries to invite leading persons of the outside world, take them around to selected sites, and use their reports, if favourable, for internal and external consumption. The practice, however, does not seem confined to Communist countries alone. Mr. Strachey is certainly not the first nor, perhaps, the last to come to India on a special invitation from the Government or some semi-governmental institution and write an article (ENCOUNTER, September 1956) which could as well have been written without coming to this country.

The presuppositions involved in Mr. Strachey's article appear to be the following:

(1) Rapid industrialisation is an imperative for all underdeveloped countries. In case it is not achieved, they are bound to go Communist.

(2) Industrialisation means a high rate of investment in heavy capital-goods industries as against consumer-goods industries. (In his surprising terminology, he calls the former "left" and the latter "right.")

(3) Such industrialisation can only be carried out under state auspices.

(4) If democracy survives in this process, well and good; if not, it is regrettable but nothing can be done about it.

These presuppositions are not confined to Mr. Strachey alone. They are, in fact, shared by many intellectuals of the West including even those who professedly value democracy. But however widely shared, the presuppositions are wrong.

1. Not a single country has gone Communist until now just because it was not industrially developed, and the mere fact of a country's being industrially developed has not stood in the way of its going Communist. The victory of Communism in the countries of Eastern Europe and Asia has been primarily a military victory actively aided and abetted by the Soviet Union. The industrialisation of Czechoslovakia, on the other hand, did not stand in the way of its becoming Communist either. If France and Italy have not gone Communist, it is not because they are industrialised but because it might have led to a world war for which the Soviet Union was not prepared.

2. The pattern of "left"-industrialisation, to which India seems to have subscribed to some extent, is little desired by the people in any country. What people do want is a relative increase in per capita consumption of real goods and services. Professor Mahalanobis, according to Strachey, "has a great respect for Russian industrial development." He must, to be consistent, have an equal disrespect for Russian welfare-development. But, perhaps, it does not matter much to him, as to many of his counterparts in the West, that Soviet economic development, after thirty-eight years of pursuing material welfare, cannot even provide sufficient black and white bread to its own people, according to its own economists. Indian and Asian intellectuals have no monopoly of perverse admiration towards China or Russia. It was the bourgeois intellectuals of the super-industrialised West who turned a blind eye to the enormous failures of the Russian experiment and popularised its myth as the "peoples' heaven" on this

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miserable earth. That persons in high authority should continue to feel fascinated by this pattern may speak volumes for their knowledge of statistics or love of power, but little for their sense of values.

3. Mr. Strachey has not directly subscribed to this presupposition. He has only suggested that it is the entrepreneurial deficiency of the Indian capitalist class which has *forced* the Indian Government into socialist measures. As other countries of Asia and Africa have an entrepreneurial class even less developed than that of India, the argument has, however, general application.

The charge against the performance of private enterprise in India is only superficially correct. Its performance under the active discouragement of a foreign rule was substantial when compared with the relative performances of its counterparts in other countries under foreign domination in Asia and Africa. Since Independence, and particularly during the first five-year plan, it has almost consistently over-fulfilled its targets. Unfortunately, space does not permit me to give details about the economic performance of private enterprise in India.

Mr. Strachey seems to have swallowed whole the story dished into his ears by some Secretary of some Government Department. It is an open secret that the Government refused permission for the building of a steel mill to a leading industrialist of India. The Industrial Policy Statement of May 1956 was not *forced* upon the Government because of the reluctance of private enterprise to enter certain fields, but because of considerations which were primarily *ideological* in character. If it had not been so, these fields would not have been *reserved* for the public sector. Rather, the private sector would have been left free to enter in whenever it liked. Has the establishment of the State Trading Corporation, for example, been forced upon the government because private enterprise was not prepared to engage in trading? State initiative in establishing industrial enterprises has not been a monopoly of socialist governments. Others, however, have not exclusively reserved the sphere to themselves and, in fact, have engaged in it to create that economic climate in which private enterprise may function. To underplay the ideological factor may be good Public Relations for Mr. Strachey's hosts, but it hardly squares with the facts of the case.

4. Mr. Strachey should be taken as being seriously concerned about democracy. Otherwise, "The Indian Alternative" would make no sense. The alternative lies just in the achievement of economic development *with* the preservation of democracy. Yet Mr. Strachey, along with many others who visit this country, seems hardly concerned about it. To plead that if the plan does not succeed India will go Communist, and to ignore the fact that, in making the plan succeed, India can go authoritarian, is hardly any service to democracy. It is well known that planning under State auspices geared to heavy investment in capital-goods industries tends to generate authoritarian trends in a polity.

A watchful eye would have tried to notice these tendencies and warn its friends who were supposed to share that value of actual and possible dangers. It would have told Mr. Deshmukh, for example, that the ambition of extracting 10 to 15 per cent of surplus from the Indian peasantry might lead to a repetition of the Russian experiment. It would have noted with misgiving the emphasis on agricultural co-operatives and the recent delegation to China to study the methods of bringing the peasants at an accelerating rate into the co-operatives. It would have looked askance at this fascination with Communist methods in a field where they have been the least successful in raising the productivity of land. It might have asked Mr. Dey what is happening to the voluntary organisations in this country. Are they becoming more and more financially dependent and is the content of their activity more and more specifically regulated in case they are granted some assistance?

There are innumerable such questions to which Mr. Strachey might have found interesting answers if he had cared to ask them. He would, of course, have had to look around and talk to less interesting persons than Nehru, Deshmukh, Krishnamachari, Dey, Mahalanobis, and others. But in that case he might have been more helpful to them and to democracy, for any observations by him might possibly have been listened to with some attention by them. As to Indian critics, the Prime Minister has spread the fashion of treating them either as fools or foreign agents. The negative feed-back of information as to where, when, and how democratic liberties are being threatened is as important as the anxiety about the behaviour of the economic variables for the success of the economic plan of this country. To turn a blind eye towards the former would, perhaps, be as great a betrayal as unhelpful indifference towards the latter.

DR. DAYA KRISHNA

Delhi University

Status Symbols and Equality

MR. CROSLAND in his first article "About Equality" said that inequity in work rewards now arose less from direct money emoluments than from the non-pecuniary differentials which conventionally go with them. He gave as examples differences in holidays, sick-leave, working hours,

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and superannuation, all of which have traditionally distinguished works and staff. These differences, however, are declining and would have declined still more if the manual workers' unions had not been more interested in increases in take-home pay than in these fringe benefits. It is not these conventional differences which should be important for those concerned with equality—indeed, some recent unpublished research by the Acton Society Trust suggests that these differences may often be unknown to the manual workers, or, where they are known, considered unimportant in comparison with their own higher money incomes—but the growth in other privileges which are designed to emphasise differences in status.

Any observant visitor to large companies must be struck by the variety of these status symbols which in some companies are used to distinguish each tier in the organisation. The most common distinction is by eating place. Separate eating places will usually be provided for the manual workers, staff, and senior management or directors, but there may be as many as six or seven different grades of eating place in a large company, and one company was even discussing whether it should not have five different standards of managers' dining-room in order to emphasise the value of promotion. Office furniture, particularly the type of desk and whether there is a carpet—distinctions which have proverbially obsessed the civil service—is now often a reliable index to rank in private industry. To have one's own secretary, even if she is an inefficient young girl, rather than to have to use the typist pool, can be another much competed-for mark of arrival.

There are many other status symbols which the innocent abroad in the world of big business might not suspect: where one parks one's car, which entrance one may come in by, and which lavatory one uses. There are often several grades of lavatory, and directors and perhaps a few other privileged élite may have a special lavatory to which they have a key. Indeed, the lavatory is one of the most important status symbols, as to meet a junior employee at this place of common humanity would indeed be an affront to dignity. . . .

Why have these status symbols developed in large companies? One explanation is that they provide an alternative to the decreased economic incentive. This seems to be the most common reason for their use as a deliberate company policy. Another reason, and one which might explain why they are more common in some companies than in others, is their value as an external support to authority. They are therefore likely to be strongest where control is most authoritarian, as one of the marks of the authoritarian character is an emphasis upon the separateness of the leaders. Yet another reason for the growth of these distinctions in large companies may be as a protection against feelings of insecurity. In a large organisation, whether it is the civil service, a large private company, or a nationalised industry, the individual is anonymous. Hence it is harder for him to obtain respect and recognition for his intrinsic qualities as an individual; instead, he may try to determine and protect his position by these outward symbols of arrival.

The last two reasons suggested for the development of status symbols may help to explain why these are not purely a British phenomenon. A similar stratification exists in some big American companies which seems to confirm the suggestion that this may be a tendency inherent in large organisations.

So far the possible implications of this proliferation of status symbols seems to have been ignored by those who wish to develop a more egalitarian society. Tawney has suggested that:

> A society which is convinced that inequality is an evil need not be alarmed because the evil is one which cannot wholly be subdued. In recognising the poison it will have armed itself with an antidote. It will have deprived inequality of its sting by stripping it of its esteem.

This industrial stratification suggests that far from depriving "inequality of its sting by stripping it of its esteem" we may be encouraging the very forms of inequality which rest on esteem and that by attacking some forms of inequality, particularly economic inequality, we are encouraging other, and possibly more pernicious ones. . . .

Mr. Crosland in his first article suggested that we should move slowly forward towards greater economic equality, and "after the next step forward, pause and scrutinise the repercussions, if any, on economic behaviour." What is argued here, however, is that the repercussions may not be on economic behaviour alone, the danger may not be so much that people will work less hard, but that they will develop other and, from the point of view of equality, less desirable forms of incentives.

Economic incentives, within limits, provide the possibilities of choice which incentives based on status symbols do not. A manual worker, for instance, can save up to travel first on his holiday, and quite a number apparently do, but at his place of work he must always enter by a different gate, use a different lavatory, and eat in a different place; in other words, he is treated as an inferior being. It may be that society needs these marks of status and indeed should encourage their orderly development as an inexpensive method of stimulating effort, but let us

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at least be aware that by so doing we are supporting a form of inequality which is essentially based on esteem.

ROSEMARY STEWART

London, W.1

"Remembering the Thirties"

I was glad when Mr. Spender quoted a stanza of mine in his "Notes from a Diary" (the issue for September), not only because it assured me of my niche—albeit anonymously—in that contemporary hall of fame, but because it explained to me some otherwise baffling remarks which he had made elsewhere, on the poem from which the stanza is taken. Permit me, at the risk of boring your readers, to quote the verses anew:

The Anschluss, Guernica—all the names
At which those poets thrilled, or were afraid,
For me mean schools and schoolmasters and games;
And in the process someone is betrayed.

Now what does Mr. Spender suppose that last line to mean, if not precisely the comment which he with much head-shaking is moved to make? —that because "the murder of several millions of people in the most horrible ways possible" is not present to my mind as a vivid and haunting image, I have (so I feel) betrayed them? He says that these facts "have percolated" (to me) "simply as a 'movement' of older writers, against which he reacts." For this assumption he has no warrant either in my poem or anywhere else. On the contrary, I am not such a "*young* poet" as not to have spent the years 1941 to 1946 on military operations which were the direct consequence of the events referred to; he can be sure that in the course of this experience the significance of these events "percolated" quite ineluctably.

And indeed it had percolated before—so far as was possible. I am particularly happy to make this point because it relieves him of the necessity of his public act of self-abasement: the older generation of writers, himself included, did not fail by "writing work which instead of revealing, concealed the realities." He and his contemporaries revealed the reality—so far as one could to a schoolboy. Which is what my poem is about (and after all, it is there to be read): it is about the pathos of the fact that no generation, however brilliantly resourceful and persuasive, can ever convey wholly to any other generation its sense of the urgency of the issues which confront it. The poem says that this is nobody's fault but is in the scheme of things. And Mr. Spender's misreading of this stanza explains to me why he has taken as a gratuitous insult to himself and "his generation" a poem, "Remembering the Thirties," which I conceived to be, rather, a handsome tribute to them all. (Read the last stanza, please, Mr. Spender—and this time, I mean, *read* it.)

I hope at least that he will, on the score of this letter, absolve me from the necessity of looking up the files of "a few old newspapers." I hold by the position expressed in my poem, that what divides us from "the facts" isn't "the unwinding newsprint in which politics, statistics, manifestos, poems, news are written," but simply the lapse of time and the limits of the sympathetic imagination.

DONALD DAVIE

Dublin

"Young Spain"

M. BONDY's article on Spain [July 1956], which I have just seen, seems to me to suffer from certain confusions which mar his splendid attempt to clarify an important subject which is almost completely misunderstood in England. To take one example: I was living in a college in Madrid University during the disturbances of which M. Bondy writes: "Numerous youthful Falangists took part in this democratic movement, and the organ of the S.E.U., supposedly the authentic voice of Falangism, was itself suppressed in consequence of this incident and the clashes between students and militiamen which followed." This scarcely explains the complexity of the situation. The uniformed, disciplined, and sometimes armed "cadres" of Falangist militiamen are in the main composed not only of middle-class schoolboys but also of workers from Madrid and even from other towns. Very few of them are students, and of those who are I doubt if many took part in any democratic movement. There is little dissidence among Falangist youths because dissident youths are unlikely either to join or remain in the movement. The dissidence lies rather in a small group of older men who joined the movement long ago and whose positions still depend upon it although they themselves have adopted more progressive, though probably not democratic, ideas. Such distinctions as this seem to me essential for an understanding of modern Spain.

ANTHONY LUTTRELL

London, W.8

Are Trade Unions Necessary?

WITH reference to the extract from Peter Wiles' article which I read in the *Daily Telegraph*, may I give my own experience in support of the argument that wage-rates should be flexible enough to have regard to the supply conditions, as indicated by waiting-lists on the one hand and

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unfilled-vacancy lists—such as those at Tipton (Staffs) school—on the other. I am qualified to work as a teacher but for over a year I have been unable to find a post in this area. Personally, I should rather work for half pay in this area than move to Tipton and earn the full rate of remuneration.

The T.U.C. leaders seem to forget these social facts when they make their speeches in the invigorating atmosphere of Brighton, where—no doubt—children in State schools can receive full-time education.

D. S. BLACKLOCK

Iver Heath, Bucks.

"Of Poor Bert Brecht"

I WAS very interested to read the article on Bert Brecht in the July ENCOUNTER, but I feel that, for the sake of accuracy, there is one misstatement of fact which should be corrected.

1. On page 49 the writer states: "Today no one in Germany can listen to the *Three-Penny Opera* any more." This is not borne out in Bonn where a revival of the film *Die Dreigroschenoper* which, as you are probably aware, was banned in 1933, has been running for the last seven weeks. Certain of the tunes are also now becoming very popular. I would not, however, venture to erect a speculative edifice on this undoubted fact.

2. At the risk of being pedantic I should also like to take exception to certain of the translations. Although you state in a footnote that you do not attempt to go beyond a literal rendering this is, I think, misleading in certain cases. In particular, I should have thought that at the bottom of page 45 (*Furcht und Elend des Dritten Reiches*) the phrase would have been better translated as "Fear and poverty in the Third Reich." There is also an obvious mis-translation in the curriculum vitæ at the beginning of the article. The phrase "sanitation corps" is presumably based on the German "Sanitäts"—which refers to medical personnel, and a more accurate translation would, therefore, be "medical corps."

A. W. RHODES

British Embassy
Bonn

Eastern Variations

ON page 26 of the August ENCOUNTER a reference to the *Eastern* provinces of the U.S.S.R. suggests that Vilna has been forcibly removed from its ancient site, while on page 27 the word *hoards* as applied to tourists suggests an entirely new and unpleasant type of holiday (concentration) camp. If my inferences are justified, the dire facts should be disclosed.

M. L. POSTON

Exmouth, Devon

When Hebe *was diſplaced by* Ganymede
To Earth ſhe ſtraight repair'd with frantick Speed,
Whither arriving, ſhe was much ſurpriſed
To find that daedal Mortals had deviſed
For their Refreſhment, an Elyſian *Brew*
Surpaſſing far the Nectar that ſhe knew.
So Skyward the celeſtial Bar-maid ſoar'd
Where Gods and Goddeſſes with one Accord,
Who taſted of this Lickour's Strength and Flavour,
Received her back into her wonted Favour.
With Chaunts of Praiſe and Thanks Olympus *rings*
For all the Health and Vigour GUIÑNESS brings.

G.E.2793.A

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BOOKS

The Remaking of Man

ONE of the most urgent problems—perhaps the most urgent problem—facing the world today is how to change the character and behaviour of adult human beings within a single generation. This problem of rapid transformation has underlaid every revolution (as opposed to *coups d'état*) at least from the time of the English Revolution in the 17th century, which sought to establish the Rule of the Saints by some modifications in the governing institutions and the laws they promulgated; and from this point of view every revolution has failed. The successful revolution will place power in the hands of members of a different group within the society, perhaps modify the distribution of property and the crimes which the law selects for punishment; but the character of the mass of the population, their attitudes and expectations, change apparently very little; as revolutions recede in history what appears most striking is the continuity of the society of the country, as the new institutions are adapted to the existing adult characters of the population, rather than the adult characters modified to the new institutions.

Up till the present century revolutions were typically concerned with the internal arrangements of one political unit, one country; but the nearly simultaneous development of world-wide communications and world-wide ideologies — democracy, socialism, communism — has posed the problem not merely of how to transform ourselves—whoever "ourselves" may be—but how to transform others; in different settings these "others" are the under-developed countries, or the uncommitted nations, or the Asian and African peoples, or even, with messianic exaltation, the whole world.

Simultaneously with the revolutions which so signally failed to establish the Rule of the Saints, or the Reign of Reason, or the Classless Society, a remarkably successful transformation (in most cases) was being effected in individual Europeans who left their countries of origin to populate the new "white" dominions which were established in the less inhabited portions of the temperate zones; in the first instance the United States of America, and also, following similar patterns, Canada, Australia, New Zealand were able to accept large numbers of individuals or families from the most varied backgrounds and transform them within a generation into good citizens of their countries of adoption, with changed values, habits, and expectations.

This successful transformation of millions of immigrants into Americans, Canadians, or the like was conducted without theory, without much ratiocination, as it were intuitively or unconsciously; claims were made for the evident superiority and attraction of democracy, freedom or opportunity, the American Constitution or British parliamentary government; but while the process was at its most vigorous, little attempt was made to discover how the transformations actually occurred, how the new values and expectations were adopted and maintained. Only when the flood of immigration had slowed down to a trickle was some attempt made to analyse the process of transformation for immigrants to the United States, and the key-rôle, in that particular setting, of the woman schoolteacher as a model and exemplar of proper American behaviour pin-pointed.* In our original thinking, this rôle of the school-teacher, and the derivatives of this situation, were idiosyncratic to the culture of the United States; we did not, and do not, have comparable data for the processes of transformation within the British Commonwealth; and it did not seem possible at the time to extrapolate from this unique situation.

A further clue was provided by my hypothesis that the very great modifications in the behaviour of the English urban working classes in the 19th

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* *And Keep Your Powder Dry*. By MARGARET MEAD. Chapter III (New York, 1942).

The Americans. By GEOFFREY GORER. Chapter III (London, 1948).

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century from violence and lawlessness to gentleness and law-abiding resulted from the peculiar invention of the English police forces,* which provided in the policeman an exemplar of self-control which the mass of the population could emulate and use as a model. This hypothesis was not provable; it was based on the one hand on the historical facts of the transformation of urban behaviour, and, on the other, the very great admiration for and identification with the police which I discovered in my large samples.

THESE two hypotheses only dealt with portions of single societies—the new United States immigrants, the urban English working class; we had not, till now, a model, or even working hypotheses, of the way in which a whole society can be transformed within a single generation. With the publication of Margaret Mead's *New Lives for Old*† the whole approach to the problem is radically altered, and our ability to think about the remaking of man in a single generation greatly enhanced; for this is an account of a society which has transformed itself within twenty-five years, and which Dr. Mead had studied in its primitive state. The leading men of today were the small boys of twenty-five years ago who were described in such vivid detail in *Growing Up in New Guinea* (New York and London, 1930).

This book, together with the associated more technical papers by Dr. Mead and Dr. Fortune, dealt with the Manus of the Admiralty Islands. In 1928, and for untold generations before that, the Manus could properly be described as "primitives" or "savages," people with a technology little more complicated than that of our Stone-Age ancestors, speaking an idiosyncratic language completely understood only by the few thousand members of their society, following a religion which no other society shared, in which the censorious ghosts of dead ancestors, communicating through mediums, punished every infringement of the rules governing economic and sexual transactions. They had trade relations with neighbouring tribes, bartering the results of their fishing for other foods and manufactures, and using the surplus acquired to accumulate the dogs' teeth and shell money necessary for liquidating the debts accrued to sponsors who had paid the heavy bride-price for a wife, and in turn becoming the sponsors of the marriages of other young men. Their only persistent contact with the greater world was the departure of some of the younger men for indentured labour on plantations where they would learn the *lingua franca* of Pidgin (or, as it is now called, Neo-Melanesian), earn money with a wider currency than dogs' teeth, and get a little knowledge of how other peoples ordered their lives. This was an experience for individual young men, and a subject for conversation; but when their period of indenture was finished, they returned to the treadmill of debts, taboos, and unceasing effort to which they saw no alternative. In 1928 the missions had not yet arrived, but they were approaching near enough so that the Manus could consider the alternatives offered; and the general consensus was that Roman Catholicism was the more desirable, since the privacy of auricular confession would be an undoubted gain over the public confession demanded by the family ghosts.

This rigid, competitive, angry adult society provided no rôle for the pre-adolescent boys; and their earlier years were spent in carefree, cooperative, relatively unstructured play until an arranged betrothal brought them as debtors into the adult world.

By 1953 the Manus had moved from their pile-dwellings to the neighbouring shore; the nearly naked, mop-haired savages dressed in trousers and shirts with modern hair-cuts. They bought and sold their goods in the world market; they were members of a world religion, albeit in a dissident form, since there had been a dispute with the missionaries; as far as was possible they were using modern medicine; they had marriage by choice, without the payment of bride-price; they had formalised education, schooling in reading, writing, and arithmetic; and they were most enthusiastic followers of the forms of democratic government and democratic justice, with daily discussions at village meetings, most anxious to get their village council recognised by the Australian administration. To the best of their ability, and with a striking measure of success, they had transformed themselves into participants in the contemporary globe-encircling democratic world.

Dr. Mead's book describes and analyses the historical events which lead from stone-age Manus of 1928 to air-age Manus of 1953, recounts in absorbing detail the way of life and institutions of modern Manus, counter-pointing this with the way of life and institutions of Manus a generation earlier, following through the development of named and known, twice-studied individuals. This unique study is so rich in vivid information and illustration that no summary can do justice to it. The adjective "unique" is justified because, although on occasion anthropologists have made return visits to a previously studied tribe, they have never

* *Exploring English Character*. By GEOFFREY GORER. (London, 1955.) Especially Chapter XIII and Appendix One.

† New York, Morrow, 1956. $6.75.
London, Gollancz, 1956. 25s.

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studied the changes in identified individuals. No previous anthropological study has concentrated on the observation and analysis of change, though a hypothetical reconstruction of the past has been a feature of some field-studies. There is nothing in anthropological literature to which this double study of the Manus can be properly compared.

ALTHOUGH a summary is impossible, insight can be gained by a rather abstract tabulation of the conditions which accompanied this dramatic transformation. There would appear to be five of them.

(i) The Manus adults found their traditional culture irksome and restrictive. The young men, after their carefree boyhood, and perhaps experience on plantations, felt themselves caught in a trap. They knew vividly that other peoples' lives were arranged in other ways. They were predisposed to change, if they could see how this could be achieved.

(ii) The Admiralty Islands, where the Manus dwell, was used as a major American base during the war, nearly a million young American men passing through the area. The distinctions of American social class are chiefly maintained by women, and this womanless group of Americans presented a vivid model of fraternal egalitarianism. The great attention paid by the American authorities to the health not only of their own troops but also of the Manus assistants was a continuous lesson in the value given by members of a democracy to the life of each individual. The easy generosity of the Americans (often enough with "Uncle Sam's" property) taught a revolutionary new attitude towards material possessions and provided plenty of material, perhaps especially sawn wood, with which the Manus could build the settings for a new sort of life.

(iii) Many tribes in New Guinea participated in apocalyptic "Cargo cults"; the common feature of these cults is that prophets or other people in trance state that if all the old belongings are destroyed in suitable sacrifices, the ancestors will bring ships loaded with the desired goods of the white men as a reward. In some areas these cults caused a great deal of loss and many difficulties for the administering authorities. In Manus the cult, which was called The Noise, only lasted a few days; but during those days all the objects of material magic were thrown into the sea; the old black magic was jettisoned, save the magic of one old man; his magic was verbal and he had nothing to throw away. The Manus moved from their pile-dwellings to a completely new village on the shore.

(iv) A charismatic political leader of genius, Paliau, was available to give form and direction to the vague aspirations towards a dignified and democratic way of life.

(v) Some of the local Australian administrators were sympathetic and helpful in the implementation of the new Manus way of life, though they had to counter suspicion and hostility from some of their superiors.

Put even more briefly, the Manus had a predisposition to change; they were presented with a model of a way of life which they considered superior; they made a sudden and complete break with their old way of life; they had a leader to give the new way of life direction; and they were sympathetically helped by the representatives of higher authority with whom they were in most direct contact. The availability of a man of Paliau's genius is obviously an unpredictable accident which cannot be generalised; but the other four conditions—readiness for change, the presentation of a model for study and observation, the sudden and complete break with the past, nurture and support during the first years of the new life—would seem to provide a paradigm of the way in which men may be changed in a single generation.

THE first and fourth conditions require little comment. Unless there is a willingness to change a traditional way of life, all changes will be resented and resisted; unless the economically and militarily superior neighbours or administering powers nurture and support the new society or new aspirants they can have only slight chance of survival. The other two conditions are however much more novel and controversial.

In her concluding chapter Dr. Mead particularly stresses the desirability of rapid and complete change, as contrasted with the gradual handing over of small selected portions of the superior culture. She uses the illustration of clothing the naked. If cloth is provided for people who have previously lacked it, they will quickly become dirty and shabby unless at the same time a continuous supply of soap is assured, and the necessary implements and materials for mending and replacing clothes, and irons for smoothing them made available. The houses of the previously naked will become disorderly slums unless containers—cupboards or chests-of-drawers—are provided to hold the clothes not in use, and lines for drying the newly washed garments. If shoes are provided as well as clothes, then chairs and tables will be necessary as the floor will no longer be suitable for sitting on. And so on. The transmission of selected aspects of a culture may well be degrading to the receivers; the complete and sudden change from the old to the new, the transmission of the totality as far as is practical, is far more likely

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to achieve success. In the case of the individual immigrants to whom I referred earlier, the crossing of the ocean, the abandonment of all that was old and familiar, is a close analogue to the communal destruction of the past in the Cargo cult.

This is Dr. Mead's major conclusion, and I think it is true, important, and a new insight. I should like however to consider somewhat further the remaining component in the Manus transformation: the presentation of a model of a way of life which they considered superior.

The presence of a model—the American woman school-teacher, the English policeman, the American army—is the unifying element in all the rapid transformations which we have been considering. It seems at least a theoretical possibility that the presence of a model is an essential prerequisite for the transformation of attitudes and character within a single generation; and the relative failure of idealistic revolutions to produce a comparable transformation may be due to the absence of models. All idealistic revolutions, of whatever complexion, proclaim high ideals of justice, equality, righteousness, and similar supreme values; but they none of them indicate in anything like adequate detail how ordinary men or women should modify their lives, their habits and expectations, to approximate more closely to these ideals. Consequently the men and women maintain their old habits and expectations in the new situations; and Soviet Russia establishes new boarding-schools for the sons of professional officers a generation after a revolution had sought to abolish hereditary privilege; Napoleon crowns himself a few years after the proclamation of the Rights of Man; the officials in a nationalised industry are at least as hard to approach or persuade as the displaced owner.

A SECOND conclusion which can be drawn is that all the models so far discussed are in some sense incomplete. The American school-teacher and the English policeman were each adequate models for their own sex; but American men and English women have less satisfactory models for their rôles. The Manus had no models for the behaviour of wives and mothers, beyond what they could see on the cinema or hear from New Guinea natives who had acted as servants to Australian families. Besides the American army, their only model was a community of missionary nuns.

This led the serious, exploring Manus into great perplexity. How should one commit adultery democratically? Possessiveness was bad, anger was bad, jealousy was bad, secrecy was bad, an obsessive desire was bad and disturbing; there must be some solution which would avoid

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all these undesirable emotions. They drew up their own rules for democratic adultery (Dr. Mead describes them in Chapter XII) which are simultaneously a paradigm and a parody of the results of theoretical planning. The Manus rules for adultery have a sort of family resemblance to the East African ground-nut scheme or Lysenko's market gardening in the Arctic circle.

If, as is suggested by these data, models are essential for successful transformation, then pilot schemes and institutional inventions take on a greatly enhanced importance for the guidance both of "under-developed" and "over-developed" countries; if change is the more successful if it is as complete and rapid as possible, if progress is an escalator rather than a ramp, then our views of the momentum of progress will need considerable revision. At the moment these are only suggestions, founded on the analysis of the experience of one small group in New Guinea; when other groups are similarly re-studied these suggestions may be modified or abandoned. The great merit of *New Lives for Old* is that it opens up a whole new field for observation, experiment and speculation, a field of the greatest relevance to our present preoccupations.

Geoffrey Gorer

INDIA TO US

THAT old saw about England and America being divided by a common language—might it not be more aptly applied to India? Perhaps the greatest single influence working for a genuine misunderstanding (which is not the same thing as a genuine disagreement) between India and the West today is the fact that the Indian ruling classes—the government officials, the publicists, the intellectuals—speak to the world in English. In the case of England and America, the two nations do, after all, know rather a lot about one another, and have some sense of the material and human realities behind their respective rhetorics. But practically every thinking person in the West must often feel, more or less obscurely, that he apprehends almost nothing of Indian realities. Our press blandly ignores them: it is so much easier to summarise an official handout (in English) of what Mr. Nehru or some other dignitary said at some meeting than to try to grasp what is going on in the minds of the masses who listen (*and* think) in Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Gujerati, etc. We are, in our impatience and ignorance, tempted to believe that we have seized the substance behind these words; and the Indians believe so too. From this, all sorts of confusions may follow.

Some of these confusions are splendidly illustrated in four dialogues (in English) between the French journalist Tibor Mende and Mr. Nehru, which took place and were recorded in New Delhi a little less than a year ago.* M. Mende, who has settled comfortably on the Left Bank of European history, is under the distinct impression that Mr. Nehru is a fellow-colonist. The purpose of the interviews, it would seem, is to demonstrate to the world at large that what Mr. Nehru thinks is what M. Mende has been saying all along; and there are times when this strategy of unanimity is little short of breathtaking in the boldness with which common sense is subordinated to common opinion. M. Mende, for instance, who has the highest esteem for everything that might be described as "anti-colonial," is eager to refute any suggestion that India is in any way interested in replacing Western political dominance of world affairs with an Asian dominance. Isn't it true that India seeks only a "gradual levelling of existing inequalities" which may lead to a "new form of global order"?—and Mr. Nehru promptly agrees that he is for "equality" and against "dominance." But is it inherently plausible that 380 million Indians wish for nothing more than equality with 50 million Englishmen or 40 million Frenchmen? Of course, it all depends on what one means by "equality" and a "new global order." England not long ago thought that five British battleships as against three Japanese made for naval "parity." The differential was necessary so that England could carry out its obligations towards the preserving of international peace and order. It is hard to imagine that such differentials will cease to be considered necessary in the future, or that other nations will not wish to accomplish their version of this same mission, after their own fashion.

M. Mende's idea of a "question," then, is to state his point of view and ask Mr. Nehru to restate it. The method works, up to a point. M. Mende's political outlook, being "neutralist" and pro-Nehru, is inevitably not uncongenial to Mr. Nehru. Nevertheless there are several places in these conversations when this perfect congruence begins to slip and waver, and then one

* *Conversations with Mr. Nehru.* By TIBOR MENDE. Secker and Warburg. 10s. 6d.

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does get a fleeting glimpse, behind the cloud of a *lingua franca*, of lurking realities.

SUCH a glimpse is most clearly obtained in the fortunes (one might also say vicissitudes) of the word "democracy." It does not need many moments' reflection to conclude that in a country like India, with its particular history, religion, and customs, the liberal conception of democracy as developed in Western Europe in the past three centuries might not be relevant. However, democracy is a *good* word; Mr. Nehru has lived in a milieu where its use is prescribed for *good* people; and he employs it with a possessive —indeed, tenacious—familiarity. M. Mende is somewhat more cautious: "democracy" has lost some of its glamour in Parisian Marxist circles, and he can actually conceive of limiting it in the interests of Planning, which is for him even more of a Good Thing. But here he cannot carry Mr. Nehru along with him, for Mr. Nehru sees nothing problematical about democracy as he understands it.

"Considering the influence of this large organisation: of the Congress; and considering the influence I have, I would say that there is very little that we cannot get through here through the democratic process. . . . Here, so far as the people are concerned, they want to go as far as you can take them. They won't obstruct the way. . . . A popular dictator, if he has the people with him, can get laws passed by democratic means even though on a particular law the people's opinion may not be so keen. But he has enough following and people will say, all right, if he says so it might be good. But, what I mean is that the process remains democratic."

Well, one does not want to quibble about words, and Mr. Nehru presumably knows better than any Westerner what kind of government the Indian people like and need. But it is useful to be alert to the probability that the same word —"democracy," for instance—can mean different things in New Delhi and London or Paris*; and that the very premisses of Mr.

* In a new biography of Lokamanya Tilak, Gandhi's predecessor as a popular nationalist leader, the Indian author, after quoting Gandhi's tribute to Tilak as "the Democrat of Democrats," remarks: "It was Tilak's invariable practice never to make a decision without giving his party the opportunity of discussing the issue in a democratic way." Tilak, for whom Keir Hardie had a great admiration, opposed legislation to abolish child marriage, established two new Hindu communal festivals (one of them in honour of Shivaji, founder of the Mahratta Empire), and believed fervently in the superiority of Hindu religion and culture over all others. (See *Lokamanya Tilak*. By D. V. TAHMANKAR. John Murray. 21s.) One may be allowed to wonder if he and Keir Hardie ever did understand one another.

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JONATHAN CAPE

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Nehru's political philosophy, his ideas of the Good Society and the Good State—and doubtless the premisses and central ideas of Indian political thinking as a whole—might themselves be different from those prevailing in the West. Thus, when Mr. Nehru says that he approves of Communism "as an ideal," many a Western liberal could say the same thing in all good faith; but it would not, in fact, be "the same thing" at all. For what Mr. Nehru intends to express by this commonplace is a fundamental hostility to the liberal capitalism of the West, both as an ideal and working system—a hostility that has its own specific roots deep in Indian attitudes:

"I think that the American people have many admirable qualities. Yet I am not interested in many aspects of American life. For instance, I am not interested in providing every person in India with a motor-car, with a washing-machine or a refrigerator. The thing just does not come into my head at all. It is not that I am against material comfort, but I am not sure that it is too good to have too much of it."

It is clear that Mr. Nehru's ideal communism is very different from the Soviet ideal, which dreams with an American fervour of motor-cars and washing-machines. Nevertheless, it is easy to see how, paradoxically, he could be impressed by the very *failure* (in its own Western terms) of Russian Communism and offended by the very successes of American Capitalism. The austere poverty of the Russian system, its contempt for the petty comforts of its subjects, commends itself to him. So does its selflessness, its discipline, its anti-individualism, its conformism, its glorification of the State. When Mr. Nehru states:

"We are against concentration of power, political or economic. Therefore, we think in terms of, what may be called, the basic industries, under State control,"

he is not guilty of any logical inconsequence: he simply does not share that nervousness before the powerful State which practically all Westerners, moulded by a peculiar liberal tradition, intuitively feel. Political power in the East is not haunted by a bad conscience; it believes in itself and naturally approves of all that flows from and towards itself; and it takes for granted its own moral superiority over the self-seeking individual. There is much to be said, and much that has been said, for and against such an attitude towards power; but more important than anything one can say, is to recognise that it exists.

For various reasons, it is this objective existence of Asia we find so difficult to recognise. Like M. Mende, eastwards we project all our frustrations and our longings. India to us is not an independent nation with its own life, its own ambitions, its own purposes. Rather we prefer to see it as a nebulous "underdeveloped country" moving ineluctably towards a predetermined harmony with the West. It is not to us a separate geographical and historic entity, but a dream-world populated by disembodied "progressive" intentions. This is, for all its seeming benevolence, a thoroughly patronising view of course. It is the way parents indulgently regard their children—until the children grow up and, with a few abrupt movements, dispel all misty illusions with an assertion of their otherness.

Irving Kristol

THE FANTASTIC HERO

For about eighty years now the Wild West in general, and the cowboy in particular, have been enjoying an extraordinary vogue in America and Europe. One hack-writer produced 200 dime-novels on Buffalo Bill alone; and since then, according to Mr. Frantz and Mr. Choate,* the torrent has not abated. In 1951, one-fifth of Hollywood's 2,400 films were about cowboys; 500 towns in the United States "staged approved rodeos offering 1,750,000 dollars in prizes"; by 1952 Hopalong Cassidy "was being pictured on 63 television stations, heard over 152 radio stations, and read avidly in the comic strips of 155 newspapers"; while the Lone Ranger, Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, and other cowboy entertainers have also been prodigiously successful. There are hundreds of dude-ranches in the western states, and they have even spread eastward to the outskirts of New York itself.

In terms of literature, this passion for the West has had disappointingly thin results. There have been a few good novels, such as *Shane*, but they owed their principal reputation to their filmed versions. In fact, the Wild West is the preserve of popular, non-literary culture. It is a Never-Never Land of the mass-audience, of a different

* *The American Cowboy: the myth and the reality*. By Joe B. Frantz and Julian E. Choate, Jr. Thames and Hudson. 15s.

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order from Barrie's (though his, with its Red Indians, borrowed from the Western mythology) yet still a fantasy world.

This was true even of the early years of the vogue. It may not have been recognised at the time; and for audiences at Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, during the 1880's and 1890's, there was an extra element of excitement in the thought that these were real Indians, real cowboys, real mustangs, real revolvers. Nor indeed—as Mr. Weybright and Mr. Sell make clear,* was Buffalo Bill a fake. He *had* been scout and buffalo-hunter, he *was* a good horseman and a crack shot; he actually was more or less the person he pretended to be. But the genuine and the factitious could not be separated, either in him or in the whole idea of the West. A summons to join a military expedition against the Indians reached him while he was in the middle of a theatre performance (impersonating himself); he read the telegram aloud to the audience and hurried off, still dressed in his gaudy stage costume. The era of the open range, always highly publicised, was ending almost before it had begun. The last Indian war came in 1890. In the same year the census-takers announced that the "frontier," as a dividing line between settlement and wilderness, no longer existed. The West might still be thinly populated: it was no longer unexplored.

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HOWEVER, it was perpetuated in popular mythology. The figure of the cowboy has undergone some modification since the 1880's. He has been prettified and made more jolly and well-adjusted, as an endorser of hair-oil and breakfast cereals. In some recent Hollywood movies he has been made more sophisticated, at least in motivation. Women have been brought into his life. But, essentially, he is frozen into the patterns established eighty years ago—perhaps partly because of the inertia of popular culture, partly because he rests on a much older lineage (through Cooper's Leatherstocking, back to Robin Hood and King Arthur's knights), and mainly because these patterns of 1880 are still meaningful to us.

They have two fairly distinct forms. In one the cowboy is a modernised Sir Galahad, simple, pure, and brave, masculine yet de-sexed, finding adventure on horseback in the great outdoors. This was the cowboy-hero that Buffalo Bill represented (though his private life was not impeccable), that Theodore Roosevelt so much admired, that gave Baden-Powell inspiration for both the name and the garb of his Boy Scouts. It has remained with us, often in the debased guise of the cowboy-*entrepreneur*. Roy Rogers is one; Oblong Cassidy, as I have heard him called by a child, is another. Their horses are snow-white, their clothes are spotless; they are full of folksy goodness (see Roy Rogers' book, *The Answer is God*).

In the other form, the cowboy is a Bad Man, not as the villain whom the hero despatches but as the actual hero, the outlaw, the killer despite himself, doomed but admired. The "classic" bad man of cowboy mythology is Billy the Kid, who —Mr. Hunt tells us*—had accounted for twenty-one victims (one for each year of his life) before he was himself shot dead in 1881. We might add that other classic American gunman, Jesse James, who lived west of the Mississippi though he was not a cowboy, and was finally killed in 1882. And we might note that Australia's foremost bad man, Ned Kelly, was hanged only a few months before the death of Billy the Kid: another product of a frontier environment and a closing-frontier mythology.

The bad men are not altogether exportable. Certainly we find it hard in England to appre-

* *Buffalo Bill and the Wild West.* By VICTOR WEYBRIGHT and HENRY SELL. Hamish Hamilton. 35s.

* *The Tragic Days of Billy the Kid.* By FRAZIER HUNT. Hastings House, New York. $5.00.

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ciate some aspects of America's celebration of her West. There is a tiresome boom, for example, to Mr. Frantz and Mr. Choate, that underlies the relentless, tough-guy jocularity of their prose ("ornery" is one of their pet words). They insist that cowboy folklore is grossly exaggerated. But they dwell upon it with a curious relish, as if lawlessness and virility were synonymous. Billy the Kid has a powerful hold on their imaginations—and upon that of his biographer Mr. Hunt, for whom Billy's death is a "tragedy" and almost a martyrdom.

Yet, as a whole, our Anglo-American popular culture does respond to the idea of the cowboy, whether or not he is a good man. As a juvenile vision of an adult figure, I suppose he is ideally suited to the methods and requirements of mass-entertainment. Yet there is another side to his juvenility. The cowboy-hero not only inhabits a Never-Never Land: he is in some respects a Peter Pan—a metaphorical if not an actual orphan. He exists in a lonely vacuum, without antecedents and without prospects. He will never grow up; after 1890, there is nothing to grow to. He is, we could say, Huckleberry Finn after Huck has got to the "Territory" to which he was going to "light out" in order to escape from civilisation. The cowboy may be on the side of the law, as sheriff or Texas Ranger, or against it, as a bad man. In either case, the law is not so much a moral force as a personal equation, to be solved before he again moves on. He does not belong to society; and the suggestion of freedom —the kind that Huckleberry experienced as a boy—holds a delicious appeal for our docketed, regimented social structure. Sometimes he assists society, but he is not sought out by it. He is unwanted, except if he is "wanted" for murder; and the suggestion of emptiness—the kind that Huck might have experienced as an adult—holds another sort of fascination for our lonely crowds.

In fact, we can see that the cowboy has moved out of the Wild West into other genres. The tough, laconic detective in Raymond Chandler or Dashiell Hammett, with no wife or family and no home apart from a hotel room, is the cowboy urbanised. He may clean up a situation; he does not become involved in it. Again, we cannot separate the real from the artificial, so as to determine how much solitariness has become a pose, adopted unwittingly by inarticulate men who have simply watched too many bad television programmes about solitary, inarticulate cowboys and detectives. There are ugly tinges of sadism in the mythology. But the chief impression it leaves is of a society that is wistful rather than distraught, and bored rather than discontented, whose popular culture finds in the Wild West a zone where both its aspirations and its grievances may be portrayed.

Marcus Cunliffe

THE YOUNG AND THE ESTABLISHED

IN HIS introduction to a new and most distinguished collection* of modern French short stories, John Lehmann challenges the idea that the French can no longer write *contes* of between two and ten thousand words; indeed he refutes it with the score or so that he prints. But the fact remains that stories of this length are increasingly rare in France. What Mr. Lehmann calls "the conditions of publishing" seem to force French writers to dress up the works of their imagination as *cahiers* or *récits*, even as "the conditions of publishing" here make our own writers turn their truth into fiction trimmed to one of the two approved lengths, four thousand words or eighty thousand words. Mr. Lehmann's anthology is the fruit of many years' work as an editor, and I doubt if anyone without his experience and knowledge could have put it together. The Paris editors, who do virtually nothing to encourage this sort of story, will perhaps be surprised by the substance as well as the merit of the book; for at the very least it gives a striking picture of the changes which have come over French writing between the early thirties and the middle fifties. Different readers will feel differently about those changes. I myself discovered with mild dismay that all the stories I liked best in the collection were by the older contributors—Supervielle, Giono, Jouve, Chamson; the ones I liked least were by the youngest.

On the other hand, of the English novels I have read this month it is one by a man of twenty-five which has given me most pleasure. *Morning** by Julian Fane is quite exceptionally good. It is a novel I feel I shall never forget: the people in it, the setting, the thoughts and feelings of the hero are all presented so vividly and truly, and yet so economically and simply.

The novel, which is written in the third person—though one can scarcely doubt that it is

* *Modern French Stories.* Edited by JOHN LEHMANN. Faber and Faber. 15s.

* *Morning.* By JULIAN FANE. John Murray. 12s. 6d.

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largely autobiographical—tells of two years in the life of a boy named Vere before he goes away from home to his prep school. The dates are 1938 and 1939. The approach of the unknown—and dreaded—thing for Vere thus coincides with the approach of war, and his departure for school with the departure of his father for the army. The story is set in a large country house, with stables, gardens, and the broadest acres. It is a nobleman's world; and yet the book is utterly free from any hint of *snobisme*. The portraits of the nurse and servants are drawn with quite as much sympathy and insight as those of the parents, the brother, and the hero himself. In such a house the green baize door is no barrier for a child of eight, and Vere's heart goes out as much (perhaps more) to Nannie and Flora, the sweet nursery maid, as (or than) it does to the gentle, but remote and rather formal, mother. The relationship between Vere and his father, which is more complex than the others, is no less skilfully explored by Mr. Fane. The chapter which describes Vere's following hounds on foot when his father is riding is the best account of a hunt that I have ever read, and despite my being a congenitally anti-blood sports man, I caught from this description a sense of the exhilaration as well as the cruelty of the chase. I wish that Mr. Fane had not written in the historic present tense, a device best left to arty writers; otherwise I think the book is faultless—for a man so young, a triumph.

MR. LARKIN'S novel,* though keenly interesting, is a puzzling and rather disappointing one: disappointing at any rate to a reader who thinks as well as I do of Mr. Larkin's poetry. The whole conception of it is somehow incongruous, as if the author had set out to combine a novel of the kind Miss Elizabeth Bowen writes with a novel of the kind one associates with The Movement or pedagogues' co-operative. Perhaps it is more truly a case of a man with a natural sensibility akin to Miss Bowen's forcing himself to write in a tougher "contemporary" style and to expound, if only at intervals, the angry nihilism of the current mode.

One result of this dislocation is that when Mr. Larkin is writing at his best he is often the least convincing. He is like an archer who scores his bull's-eyes in other people's targets. I might give three examples of this. Early in the book, which begins with a feeble description of an industrial town in a snowstorm, Mr. Larkin tells how his central character, his "girl in winter," Katherine Lind, takes a junior clerk from the Public Library where she works to a dentist. Squalor,

* *A Girl in Winter*. By PHILIP LARKIN. Faber and Faber. 15s.

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fear, anxiety, and fuss are most effectively established. But too effectively. It is like a visit to an abortionist. If it had been presented as such, it would have been excellent. As an account of a visit to a dentist it is much too sensational and Zolaesque.

My other two examples concern the age and nationality of Mr. Larkin's heroine. In the middle and longest section of the novel he describes how the girl comes for the first time to England to spend a summer with a family in Berkshire. Everything she does and says would have been completely convincing if she had been aged twenty or even nineteen, but one is asked to believe that the wisdom, maturity, and psychological intuition she possesses belong to a girl of sixteen. One cannot believe it.

The business of Katherine's being a foreigner is really most mysterious. Mr. Larkin takes elaborate pains to avoid disclosing her nationality; he talks of "her country," "her own language," and if he once drops a clue that she is one thing, for example German (a reference to the Rhine), he later says something which rules out that hypothesis. Personally I am incapable of conjuring up any definite picture of a foreigner; in fact I have always supposed that only the most obsessive xenophobe could do so. The net effect of Mr. Larkin's circumlocution is to make his heroine unnecessarily nebulous. A thought which crossed my mind as a possible solution to the mystery is that Katherine was not thought of by the author as a foreigner at all, but as an English girl from a lower class who might have become in similar circumstances an uneasy guest in an upper-bourgeois household. Once again, if she had been, it would have been a truer picture.

However, I must repeat that the story is a very interesting one. During her stay with the Berkshire family, Katherine falls in love with the son, Robin, who is her own age. He does not fall in love with her; he is in any case too inhibited and British to show anything but vague friendliness. Nevertheless Katherine believes that Robin's sister Jane is jealous of her and hostile, and the atmosphere in the house becomes, if not intense, oppressive. Katherine clears the air a little by being rude to Jane—a very "contemporary" expedient—but her love for Robin cools, and she leaves the house with a feeling of emptiness and presumably relief.

Some five years later, when the war is on and Katherine has returned to England to become a library clerk in a provincial town, Robin, now a subaltern, comes to see her. She is quite glad, but not wildly glad, to see him. She gives him supper at her furnished rooms, but the evening goes stickily, chiefly, one cannot but surmise, because Katherine's manners are so bad, though his are not much better. When Robin makes a tentative pass at her, she laughs him off. But Robin, who is feeling sexy, lingers on for hours. Eventually he asks again if he may tumble her; and this time, still feeling neither love nor lust for him, Katherine consents, chiefly, so far as I can make out, because she is dying to get to bed and to sleep, and with a guest who will not leave she can see no other way of putting her head on the pillow and the light out.

I am not sure whether the end of the book is not perhaps a little too conventionally *blasé*, but Mr. Larkin does succeed in winning a surprising amount of sympathy for his heroine. I should explain that although she is up-to-date enough to believe it does not matter how unkind one is, so long as one is honest, she has something inside her which tells her that unkindness is wrong and vulgar. Having, for example, been particularly beastly to her boss, the librarian, a pompous self-educated ass whose hidden suffering she finds out about and throws in his face, Katherine is only temporarily able to persuade herself that if it is her nature to do such things she must just accept her nature. The character of this librarian, incidentally, is a brilliant piece of satirical observation. I think Mr. Larkin is rather hard on him. But then, Mr. Larkin is a librarian himself.

*The Red Priest** by Wyndham Lewis is an embarrassing book to confront, painful even for someone who is paid to read it. Mr. Lewis's Red Priest is Father Card, a blue-blooded muscular Christian, absurdly Puseyite, crassly Fellow Travelling, culpably aggressive, acquisitive, and vain. At any rate this is what he is meant to be. What one actually finds is a novelettish dummy who says such things as this: "I have been doing no fighting since I became a sky-pilot. I have felt inclined to sock a good many people in the eyes. But I have refrained from doing so." The reader meets the Red Priest on his "luxuriously upholstered" chaise-longue: "He pulled open his dressing-gown, and his heavy muscular body lay there completely nude, except for a short pair of pants." That is on page 37. On page 40: "Card jumped off the chaise-longue, threw off his dressing-gown, and stood nude, except for his elastic-belted underwear. He looked superbly gladiatorial, heavily muscled from head to foot." A little later, when he is less "nude"—when, indeed, he is wearing all his Anglo-Catholic regalia, Father Card makes the acquaintance of Mary Chillingham, a beautiful society girl, to whom he proposes marriage. Though she moves in a world where men drink White Ladies and women talk in the dated idiom of the Bright

* *The Red Priest*. By Wyndham Lewis. Methuen. 15s.

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Young Things, this girl is impressed by Father Card's progressive ideas, his ritualism, and his physique. She marries him, not realising that he is after her money. She disappoints him, for she is extremely tight-fisted. Thus thwarted, Father Card grows nervous. One day, when his curate attacks him, he punches the man and kills him. He is sentenced to three years' imprisonment for manslaughter, and feels so ashamed of himself —and so far forgets his Anglo-Catholic principles—that he suggests divorce. His wife, however, is quite calmly making the best of the situation by writing her memoirs for the Sunday press. On his release Father Card goes to preach the Gospel to the Eskimos. Once again he loses his temper. He murders an Eskimo, and is in turn murdered by other Eskimos. I imagine Mr. Lewis intended this extraordinary narrative to be a satire of some kind; but the weaknesses he exposes are all his own, and never those of other people.

TO END: more pleasant things. First, a novel by a writer who is known to readers of ENCOUNTER, Dannie Abse. This one,* his second, is set in an RAF station in peacetime, when Mars languishes cantankerously and Venus appears only in her most melancholy guise. A shrewd, bleak, absorbing novel, old-fashioned only in its price of half a guinea.

Secondly, a writer who is new to me, but not, I believe, to the trade, Monica Stirling. Her book† is self-consciously Parisian, *école de Colette*, upper middlebrow perhaps but clever, touching, and charming. It is not a big book. Fifty-five thousand words? Would that most English novels were as short or shorter! Alas, the "conditions of publishing" forbid.

* *Some Corner of an English Field*. By DANNIE ABSE. Hutchinson. 10s. 6d.

† *Some Darling Folly*. By MONICA STIRLING. Gollancz. 12s. 6d.

Maurice Cranston

MARRIED TO WODEHOUSE

SOME writers seem inevitable yet are hardly to be placed. They are novel and yet indispensable—even when only just arrived they appear always to have been there, members of a literary body incomplete without them: and yet their "ancestors" are few, dubious, and to be searched for, and their followers are either the merest shadows or quite simply do not exist. Lewis Carroll was perhaps such an author. Mr. P. G. Wodehouse is undeniably another—and the current re-issue of his works in a cheap and handy "Autograph Edition"* may serve to remind us how little has been perhaps thought, certainly written, about this, one of the most variously skilful literary figures of our day. Or to put it another way, if we were to divide the number of Mr. Wodehouse's educated and enthusiastic readers by the number of his critics, it would give a pretty fat quotient—something incomparably larger than if we were to apply the same division sum to, say, Joyce or Mr. E. M. Forster: which may say a little about the misplaced snobberies of critics, but much more about the power of this author to allay the critical spirit by a display of assurance and technical ease that *seems* to possess more of nature than of art.

Enjoyment, in fact, precedes (and may preclude) analysis. Perhaps a case-history may illuminate. The present reviewer (not untypically, I think) first read a Wodehouse in days when the author's name was not a part of the book he paid much attention to. A couple of "Psmith" 's had found their way into his prep school library and ran the gamut of the Fifth *cum magna laude*. They were full of jokes like the one about the man who stole the raspberry jam and was caught red-handed, or the rising young author who was caught bending by some music-hall missile and "rose at least a yard and a half further"; and were pronounced "jolly funny"—a verdict that was not reversed when at public school Ukridge was added to Psmith, and Wooster to Ukridge. Indeed for all I know, Wodehouse may have come my boyish way long before even the Psmith days: for the earnest bibliophile has on his shelves battered trophies with names like *The Bully of the Fourth* by a P. G. Wodehouse with all his essentially individual literary career still before him.

At the ripe old age of fifteen, however, stern change set in. A certain headmaster was heard to observe, "Ah, Wodehouse—the greatest master of metaphor since Milton!"; and a certain classics master, "Wodehouse, *surely* the greatest poet of our time?" Alarming indeed. Up to this unhappy turning-point in life, a clear distinction had always been observed between "good books" and "books to read." Mr. Wode-

* *The Clicking of Cuthbert*; *The Inimitable Jeeves*; *Thank You, Jeeves*; *Hot Water*; *Summer Moonshine*; *A Damsel in Distress*; *The Girl on the Boat*; *Lord Emsworth and Others*. By P. G. WODEHOUSE. Herbert Jenkins. 7s. 6d. each.

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house's brain-children fell eminently among the second; and yet now the horrid suspicion had been started that in some as yet mysterious manner they might also be counted among the first. At the same time there was a sneaking presumption, none the less strongly felt for lack of analysis, that one was being got at. That sort of confidence-trick is played too frequently on the young to pass altogether without scrutiny: this pedantic praise of Mr. Wodehouse, the anti-pedant, with all its exaggerations and misdirected emphasis, was clearly in the first place not so much a measured criticism of *Thank You, Jeeves*, or *Leave it to Psmith* as a claim by the speaker to be "one of the boys," "beer and buns," "jolly good fellow." One began to like Wodehouse less because the doing so put one in not willingly shared company. Illogically, one preferred not to admire him who could also be admired for such obviously wrong reasons.

This uneasy second stage came to an abrupt close in June 1940. Mr. Wodehouse had been captured by the enemy and was rumoured to have in some quite unwhisperable way betrayed his country. We know, now that we have the texts of the broadcasts (ENCOUNTER, October and November 1954), that Mr. Wodehouse's faults, if they were faults, were extremely venial. But at the time a certain hysteria of national self-accusation, coupled with the old Puritan suspicion of enjoyment, found the incident perfect grist to its mill. All pleasures of the thirties—the baby car, the Thames valley road-house, mowing the suburban lawn, and reading Mr. Wodehouse—were at best *laissez-faire*, at worst corrupt, and in either case negatively or positively responsible for our present calamities. The Grundy-nation had found themselves a perfect scapegoat. My own reaction (for what it is worth) was rather a final slackening of an already somewhat flaccid interest. I forgot about Mr. Wodehouse and read him no more.

Now, after an interval of sixteen years, it is easier to return. From a respectable distance, one begins to see the wood from the trees, though it is an oddly baffling outline that emerges, partly amenable to description but less so to interpretation. In general, I think that one may say that there is a solid hard core of quintessential Wodehouse, from which all variations may be classed as deviations. The distinctive characteristic of this hard core is the absence of stress. That is why Mr. Wodehouse is so impossibly easy to read. We may take Bertie Wooster and Jeeves as typical figures of the centre. Wooster is eminently euphoric: he has no money troubles, love is a passion that affects the wits rather than the heart, and the worst that can happen is the ritual immolation on the final page

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of banjolele or violet haberdashery to the great god Jeeves. Wooster's troubles are mechanical troubles, not emotional: how to get girl A out of room B before C, who is wearing D's pyjamas, comes home from a night on the houseboat of E—not, not the dark night of the soul. When, on the other hand, we read, in *Summer Moonshine*:

> *"And now about my reasons for parting with the Princess Dwornitzchek. I left because I have a constitutional dislike for watching murder done—especially slow, cold-blooded murder."*
>
> *"What do you mean?"*
>
> *"My father. He was alive then—just. She didn't actually succeed in killing him till about a year later."*

—and the conversation continues in this strain, in all seriousness, for a page or so; we feel, and rightly, that Homer nods. And Mr. Wodehouse seems to think so too, for he never returns in this story to the "straight stuff." But a glance at early novels will at once betray a lot of dewy-eyed clean-limbed material rather embarrassingly expressed, that had to be worked out of the Wodehouse system before the serenity of his best period could be attained.

These are negative qualifications, however. I suppose the ruling positive characteristic is a sort of exaggeration of the accepted. All literary butlers are perfect, but some are perfecter than others, and Jeeves is the mostest. The benevolent county vagueness of Lord Emsworth, the succession of dragonish Aunts, the jokes about loony-doctors and faith-healers, evoke stock and peculiarly English responses—particularly those of an anti-poetic, anti-highbrow, anti-intense nature. The characterisation may be subtle, but it is obvious first. Wooster, the nitwit drone, is cheerfully gobbled up as such by the Fifth: it is only later that curious footnotes begin to force themselves upon the attention. Bertie has a pretty good command of the spoken tongue for a nitwit:

> *"We shall be well rid of this Tinkler-Moulkes, these Bustards, and these Blenner-hassetts. I leave them without a pang."*
>
> *"You are proposing to move, sir?"*
>
> *I raised the eyebrows.*
>
> *"Surely, Jeeves, you cannot imagine that I ever considered any other course?"*
>
> *"But I fear you will encounter a similar hostility elsewhere, sir."*
>
> *"Not where I am going. It is my intention to retire to the depths of the country. In some old-world, sequestered nook I shall find a cottage, and there resume my studies."*
>
> *(Thank You, Jeeves)*

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And he is a master of devastating, if simple, repartee. "Very good," says Sir Roderick Glossop, the nerve specialist, on hearing that Bertie will not desist from maddening his patient with the banjolele; "you will hear more of this." "'And Mrs. Tinkler-Moulke will hear more of this,' I replied, brandishing the banjolele." It is not impossible to identify Wooster the drone with Wooster the supposed recounter of his own adventures.

IF THE creation of an unmistakable personal idiom and atmosphere is a hall-mark of the genuine creator, Mr. Wodehouse passes all tests with flying colours. No paragraph of his could be mistaken for another's. His style may seem simple (again an exaggeration of the accepted—the slang, wink, and calculated timing of the professional humorist), but it is deceptively so. If it is in any tradition at all, it is that of Dickens rather than another.

> *The offices of the old-established firm of Marlowe, Thorpe, Prescott, Winslow and Appleby are in Ridgeway's Inn, not far from Fleet Street. The brass plate, let into the woodwork of the door, is misleading. Reading it, you get the impression that on the other side quite a covey of lawyers await your arrival. The name of the firm leads you to suppose that there will be barely standing room in the office. You picture Thorpe jostling you aside as he makes for Prescott to discuss with him the latest case of demurrer, and Winslow and Appleby treading on your toes, deep in conversation on replevin. But these legal firms dwindle. The years go by and take their toll, snatching away here a Prescott, there an Appleby, till, before you know where you are, you are down to your last lawyer. The only surviving member of the firm of Marlowe, Thorpe—what I said before—was, at the time with which this story deals, Sir Mallaby Marlowe. . . .*

How many times did Mr. Wodehouse re-write this paragraph, I wonder? It is a text-book example of elegant variation. Often Dickens; often a Carrollian toying with the illogical ("My name is Psmith." "Smith?" "Psmith"—where, of course, the P is silent); often a Wodehousean preoccupation with what the philologist calls "fossil words" ("In the other alternative, sir, I can only say that the imagination boggles." I inspected my imagination. Jeeves was quite right. It boggled.)

And yet when all this, and all the more that could be, has been said, Mr. Wodehouse himself remains as mysterious as Shakespeare or a wife —for on the whole the reader's attitude to him is more a conjugal than an amatory one. The private personality remains curiously withdrawn. Most people knew nothing at all of Wodehouse the man until the publication of his, and Mr. Guy Bolton's, joint autobiography, *Bring on the Girls*, in 1954. Mr. Wodehouse, we there learnt, spent most of his productive life in the world of American comedy, writing the lyrics for such transatlantic forgotten successes as *Have a Heart*, *Oh Boy*, and *Miss Springtime*, and probably being paid more for

> *I can't explain . . .*
> *It's surely not his brain*
> *That makes me thrill:*
> *I took him because . . . oh, I don't know,*
> *Because he's just my Bill.*

than for all the Jeeves books put together. There are some clues here: the burglar-and-bedroom complications of the comic novel are obviously borrowed from the stage, and Wodehouse's England is suddenly and illuminatingly seen to be an exile's England—accounting for both the loving nostalgia and the social datedness. But it is only a lifting of the corner of the curtain which it is to be hoped Mr. Wodehouse may one day give, in his own phraseology, a darned good heave.

Hilary Corke

Dannie Abse

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ABOUT OUR AUTHORS

When asked for some biographical information about himself, Peregrine Worsthorne sent in the following, which we print without further comment:

"Born 1923. Educated at Stowe, and Peterhouse, Cambridge where, as a history exhibitioner, he was tutored by Professor Herbert Butterfield. Served 1942–4 with the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry and, during the last year of the war, with Phantom, an intelligence organisation whose exact functions were never very clearly defined. One of his brother officers in Phantom turned out to be Michael Oakeshott, which at any rate meant that his academic education, far from being interrupted, was actively accelerated by endless discussions under canvas as the allies advanced through Belgium, Holland, and Germany. During a six-month period of sick leave in 1943 he also managed to go up to Magdalen, Oxford for two terms where he read political theory under C. S. Lewis. After the war he worked on the *Glasgow Herald* for two years as a sub-editor, and later transferred to the foreign department of *The Times*. From 1952–4 was a correspondent for *The Times* in Washington. On returning from the United States he was appointed leader-writer but soon found that Sir William Haley was quite exceptionally difficult to lead—or even follow. He is now working as leader-writer, specialising in foreign affairs, for the *Daily Telegraph*, the one remaining serious national journal that, in his opinion, consistently tries to give expression to a reasoned and intelligent conservatism. At the moment he is visiting the United States for his paper in an attempt to justify his position as special writer on American politics. Has contributed at different times to ENCOUNTER, *The Spectator*, *The Times Literary Supplement*, *Time & Tide*, and broadcast on the BBC."

ELIZABETH JANE HOWARD's novel, *The Long View*, was the Book Society choice for March 1956. The Italian edition of the novel, she reports, "has just won some sort of prize but nobody has bothered to tell me what." She was born in 1923 and (in her own words) "except for a few odd terms at a London day school, had no education." By the age of nineteen she had written four plays, been trained at the Mask Theatre School, and had done a certain amount of acting. Then "I got married, and took to prose."

NOTES ON OTHER CONTRIBUTORS:— ALBERTO MORAVIA's new book, *Roman Tales*, has just been published by Secker and Warburg. His article was translated from the Italian by Raymond Rosenthal. . . . DWIGHT MACDONALD, the well-known American journalist, is spending a year in London, during which period he will be contributing regularly to ENCOUNTER. . . . ERNEST GELLNER is lecturer in sociology at the London School of Economics. . . . KATHLEEN RAINE's *Collected Poems* were published by Hamish Hamilton earlier this year. She has been engaged for the past several years in a study of Blake's philosophy. . . . BASIL TAYLOR is art critic of *The Spectator*. . . . COLIN MACINNES contributed the essay "Sidney Nolan and the Kelly Myth" to our December issue. He is now working on an essay on London's bars and drinking clubs, which we shall publish shortly. . . . ROBERT WERNICK, an American psychologist now living in Europe, has just completed a book on personality tests and the peculiar personalities who dream them up. . . . DAYA KRISHNA is lecturer in economics at the University of New Delhi. . . . GEOFFREY GORER is the author of numerous anthropological works, among them: *Himalayan Village* (1937), *The Americans* (1948), *The People of Great Russia* (in collaboration with John Rickman). His last book was *Exploring English Character* (1955). . . . MAURICE CRANSTON's essay on Locke will be published in our next month's issue, in our "Men and Ideas" series. . . . MARCUS CUNLIFFE is senior lecturer in American studies at the University of Manchester.

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